

ThinkWell

LIKE A THINKTANK, BUT DEEPER

ISSUE #19

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COMMENTS on THINKWELL

Every time I see a white envelope in my mailbox, my heart leaps with anticipation of another TW. I read and reread every issue, sometimes following a topic through several issues. **Congratulations and much admiration for the wonderful job you do on this newsletter/thoughtletter.** I like the idea of having a forum for rational, intelligent discussion. This group obviously means a lot to us, or we wouldn't have put so many years and so much effort into it. I like being able to discourse with the legends of the Society and have my voice heard. It's great!

FROM THE EDITOR

Last issue had as a "free prize" the list of exemplars. Many people's copies had a blank page at the end. Sorry. The copy center didn't charge me for them. It was cheaper and easier to send them out than to remove them. Consider it page 9 of 8.

The plan at this writing is to have an index to 1-20 as the gift for subscribers with Issue #20. There are a couple of problems—it's a huge job; at the moment I'm up to about 4:9. By publishing this mention, I hope to force myself to finish. I don't want to send out an index *instead* of an issue of commentary. That would be no fun. I don't really want to send out an extra-small set of comments to offset it, either. I figure the way to raise money to do this is to have another T.I. sale, so there's a list of available issues attached. If each of you bought one T.I. they would all be sold and we could afford a fat #20 and a fat index.

Some of you are thinking "Great! I'll buy two!" Some are thinking, "Why should I want to buy old T.I.'s when I don't even use the ones I have?" **NO PROBLEM!** Send *me* the ones you have! If you do have a full set of T.I., maybe you could browse through them and choose a few to buy as gifts for your favorite newcomer, squire, apprentice, protégé, or as a prize for an upcoming arts contest or tournament.

ABOUT THIS INDEX: I intend to have a list of people whose writings have been published, with biographical blurbs. If yours has been printed and it's no longer current or you just aren't crazy about it, please send me something about yourself *right away*. A few haven't been printed (error, no comments to run with them, etc.), and I'll try to get them in the directory anyway. Thanks.

CONGRATULATIONS

Istvan Kostka will be made a Master of the Laurel on March 5, 1994. His elevation is to take place at Calontir's coronation in Fulton, Missouri. There will be a vigil there, as well as one at the Estrella War.

Lambert de Sur, of the Outlands, was offered a Pelican, to be conferred at Estrella. There's another vigil you might want to attend. Lambert reads *ThinkWell*, but nothing has stirred him to write yet.

Mistress Briony Blåaslagen and her lord, Conall, have a daughter: Brandyn Rose Vickers was born December 6, 1993. Mistress Alisandre Oliphant, also of Ansteorra, says, "Randall, Jan and I are to be godparents," and says Brandy is remarkably good looking.

As of January 23, all Caidans were thought to be safe of the earthquake, although some were camping in their yard rather than risk being in the house (which was unharmed) during a good-sized aftershock. That SCA camping gear came in useful! Speaking of camping, most of Altavia was at a local camping event in Redlands (which is technically in Dreiberger) at the time of the quake, so many of those whose homes were nearest the epicenter were away. I spoke with Mistress Éowyn, who said she had stayed up visiting until 3:00 a.m. and so was too asleep to feel anything, but at 4:30 her husband, Jamal, felt it, even as far away as they were, and described it as about twenty seconds of land-surfing. Those back home said there was no way to sleep through it in Altavia—that thirty seconds is a long time for a house to keep jerking like a giant had picked it up and was shaking it.

Other than losing nearly everything glass or ceramic, people held up well. Framed art came crashing off the walls but no scroll damage was reported. People made it to Twelfth-night by old highways, bypassing the destroyed freeways. Jamal said that the earthquake seemed to have shaken loose some of the magic—that there were miracles happening out there.

By the way, Éowyn's still trying to rent out the condo where she lived until recently, which survived intact. Anyone interested in moving out there?

—Ælfled, after speaking with Éowyn Amberdrake

Owner, Publisher, Editor, Typist, Sleight-of-Word Artist:
Lovely Assistants:

Ælfled of Duckford
Gunwaldt Gulbjorn, Susan the Midwife and Helena the Fortunate

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CHIRURGEONS AND FIGHTERS

I have been thinking and wondering why we so often hear about problems and disagreements between chirurgeons and fighters. Perhaps it is a problem with our rapid population growth in the Society and our relatively short collective memory. Perhaps a reminder is in order.

Ten years ago or so, when Calontir was in the process of becoming a kingdom, and Master Crag Duggan was Calontir's Chirurgeon, the rules were different. Every group was required to have a warranted chirurgeon on site at an official event. In order to be warranted as a marshal then, a person had to have a Red Cross first-aid certificate. (CPR was not yet required for SCA chirurgeons, and training was not widespread even in the non-SCA world.) Most marshals sent in their certificate and got warranted as a chirurgeon too for the benefit of their local group. Local groups often had several warranted chirurgeons.

Many of our fighters who have been around for some time have been marshals at one time, and remember their first-aid training. Even though some treatment methods have changed over the years, most of the basics, especially those for fighting related injuries and crises, remain the same and work just fine when combined with good common sense and experience.

When a fighter who has several years of experience in his/her own fighting-related injuries (and those of his/her opponents) also has the benefit of first-aid training, there is little reason to require assistance from the chirurgeons in the event of minor injuries or heat problems. In most cases the fighter knows what is wrong and how to deal with it. Many kinds of fighting injuries are not covered in standard first-aid training, but most seasoned fighters have learned the best treatment from experience.

If a chirurgeon, especially one who is not a fighter, tries to tell an injured fighter what to do, the chirurgeon's attentions (regardless of their good intention) may be unwelcome and actively resisted. Hurt feelings may result.

A fighter who has an injury is probably an angry person, most often angry at himself if it could have been avoided, or angry at circumstance that may prevent him/her from continuing in the tournament or war battle. This is not a good time to force unwanted treatment upon the fighter. Chirurgeons might try to approach injured fighters in much the same way they would a wounded animal—with extreme caution and tact. If the fighter does not seem to want their attentions, they should offer assistance if the fighter desires it at a later time, and leave the fighter alone.

Fighters, and the marshals who are charged with their safety, are reasonably intelligent. They know when they have a problem they are not able to handle by themselves, and will ask a chirurgeon for help.

A chirurgeon who attempts to prevent a fighter from returning to the tournament or battle, against the fighter's will, is asking for trouble. If an injury or condition is not life-threatening, the fighter usually knows the extent of pain he/she is willing to put up with, and there is little reason to keep him/her from the fun. Sometimes it would be wiser not to stress an injured limb, but that is not sufficient reason to prevent further fighting activity. The fighter may be cautioned about possible consequences and advised against

further fighting, but he/she should be left to make the decision to withdraw or continue.

Fighters do appreciate the chirurgeons making sure water, Gatorade, ice, and bandages are available. They will seek out chirurgeons when they feel they need help. Being a chirurgeon is truly a service to the Society, and can be a good experience if the chirurgeon remembers moderation and diplomacy, remains calm, and occasionally puts himself in the fighter's shoes.

Most fighters love to talk about fighting and their experiences. Maybe our chirurgeons should make an effort to spend time with experienced fighters and talk with them about fighting injuries and how the fighters think they are best treated. A little communication and understanding can go a long way toward successful working together.

—Susannah Griffon [Calontir]

This article was originally in The Mews, Calontir's newsletter.

ACCEPTING COMPENSATION

We are currently having a heated debate in the East on the subject of paid teachers, entertainers, etc. Personally, I would not accept payment as a teacher unless (perhaps) I was asked to travel a great deal farther than my normal range, to an event I would not normally, or otherwise, attend. Probably I wouldn't take payment then, either. But I understand that reduced or no fees and free feasts are common ways of attracting entertainers and negotiating for their services. Comments?

—Dorren of Ashwell [East]

MERCENARIES

Mercenaries fought in every medieval war of which there are records, at least from Hastings (20% of William's army). So their presence in the SCA definitely enhances authenticity. Yet if Galen's ducal friends cannot trust Masters of Arms, one can only imagine their denunciations (and Brion Thornbird's, no doubt) of rogues and scum who would fight for pay.

People who idolize !CHIVALRY! often presume that they have a monopoly on it. "If X is really interested in chivalry, why doesn't he want to be a knight?" Some of these people are the Authenticity Mavens suffering a relapse of Creeping Idealism.

People enjoy playing the ruffian/mercenary to the hilt, adding a lot of color to the scene thereby, because it is the medieval *frisson* that got them in in the first place, even if they are more inspired by paperback fantasy fiction than scholarly monographs. Talk to a lot of them: when they look at knights, they too often see hypocrites and bums. They have no interest in "rising in the ranks." Where knightly types see Technicolor, they see Film Noir.

But the presumption of dishonor on that account is simply bigotry. They have a code of ethics. An honest mercenary is one who stays bought. They are paid in advance, in case they are killed. The customary base rate is an ounce of silver for an ordinary fighter, for a war; poetry, trinkets, cookies, entertainment, personal coinage, beer, and a feast have from time to time been dickered in. I have never been asked for U.S. cash, although I am told this degenerate custom has occasionally been observed. Only once in the many years of hiring them have I ever been betrayed, that is abandoned on the field. That

was by a belted viscount. The other mercenaries were enraged, for this gave them all a bad name.

We all live in a [SCA] world where honor, duty, courtesy, and chivalry are essential elements, just as we all know that the sun goes around the earth and scheduled events occur two hours after their predicted times. SCA mercenaries have the honor to keep to their contracts, they have a duty to their companies, their chivalry is plain to see in their prowess and integrity on the field, and if they're rough at the edges, they are no less courteous for that. They have Virtù according to Kevin Perigryne (TW 17); the treacherous viscount did not. Atenveldt wouldn't have won Estrella IV without them.

—Gareth of Bloodwine Gorge [Atenveldt]

PRINCIPALITIES / KINGDOMS

Since TRM Finn and Garlanda created Northshield a Crown principality, principalities in general have been on people's minds.¹ Aside from Northshield, I know of two other rumored movements in the Midrealm (and remember, hearsay is worth just about as much as you pay for it!) I was wondering how many principality movements there are out there that I haven't heard about. Why do principalities form?

Also, having just gotten the Pikestaff where the new Crown Prince and Princess of Drachenwald are listed, I was wondering how the transfer to new kingdom takes place, what the whole procedure is. I was around when Calontir went kingdom, but I wasn't at the first coronation; I was not plugged into the kingdom news networks; and, to be truthful, I really wasn't very interested at the time. What happens to the old paperwork and the no longer applicable regalia? It is history. Do new kingdoms keep it all or what?

—Sion Andreas o Wynedd [Middle]

Editor's note:

I'm sorry this didn't go in nearer to its fresh date. A small but potent pile of letters was misplaced in early summer. Let's tell stories of the birth and adjustment of principalities and kingdoms, please identify timeframes in mundane years, and I'll try to print the best parts in a cohesive set.

WHO'S THE CONSORT?

I have heard people discuss a potential knight's consort as a hindrance or asset to eventual elevation to the Order of Chivalry and offer justification for so doing. Let me explain.

The Midrealm, you see, has invitational crown lists (don't ask why; just accept that there are reasons for it). The only people who did not have to have an invitation were the Knights and Masters of Arms. If I thought for a minute that the invitations to Crown did not include consideration of the consort, I'd worry about the whole mechanism. (I know that in other kingdoms with open lists people have been refused entrance on the basis of the consort.)

But, in those gilt and bygone ages, the consort of a member of the Order of Chivalry could not be denied a place. That one was assured a place, no matter what. That's the reason I heard

¹ This letter was written last Spring; Finn and Garlanda were king and queen of the Middle. They will be king and queen again pretty soon, so if you think you're getting confused, don't worry.

for why the consort of a potential knight was at one time a consideration in elevation to the order.

Since the days of King Palymar, who decreed that any peer of the realm bearing arms by letters patent might fight in crown lists without an invitation—a practice that has now passed into the realm of custom in these parts—the question has become moot. If the consort is still considered for the Chivalry candidates, I don't know about it. I do know that my cousins of the Laurel don't consider candidates' consorts, if any, in any way, shape, or form.

—Sion Andreas o Wynedd [Middle]

Ladies of Knights have a duty to be courteous, gentle, and temperate. Even should she neither hold nor aspire to Peerage, it is naive to think that the companion of a Peer is not looked upon as a gauge and/or model to others. She shares in the "upkeep" of his honor. Further, without breaking the confidentiality of the Chivalric Circle, the Knight will no doubt turn to his Lady for counsel on issues and individuals. It is well if the Lady can present an informed, well-reasoned and temperate opinion to aid her Lord in his decision-making.²

Being a Knight's Lady entails more than does being on your own or being the Lady of a non-peer. (I say Knight's Lady, but this applies to companions of Peers in general.) I'm not saying that this is right or good, it's just the way it is.

—Adriana d'Orsay [Caid]³

"CHIVALRY" OR "HONOR"

Is it a floor wax or a breath mint? "Will the girls like this? Will the girls like that?" Maybe we don't know the difference between the two, but we sure know who's got it and who doesn't. And not just on the field, either—and not just the fighter, but his consort, too.

Have you ever noticed that poor losers make poor winners when their time finally comes around? Observe the behavior of the other fellow after the Finals of the Crown Tournament is over (and where did he get to, anyway? "Oh, there he is—the admiring crowd around the winner blocked him from sight). It can be very instructive.

—Tatiana (Tanka) Nikolaevna Tumanova [West]

TIME OUT

Dearest Garlanda: speaking from the far edge of the masses: sadly, you don't get time out anymore. As soon as you arrive in your red & white school jacket, we are pointing you out—"that's Queen/Princess/Duchess Garlanda!" When you do your job well, we remember, and give you the respect you deserve, even after the job is done.

—Lord Peregrine Illuminator [Middle]⁴

² This was in reference to Countess Tamera's concept of training "Demoiselles" within her household.

³ Countess Adriana d'Orsay is the Italian widow of a French noble who is trying to have as much fun as she can while keeping a low profile so that her brothers don't marry her off *again*.

Maureen Williamson is in Regulatory Affairs for a big chemical company.

⁴ In this, the year of our Lord 823, being the fifteenth year in the newly-built church, I, Peregrine, who paints pages humbly for my

COURTLY ARTS V. NON-COURTLY ARTS

*note: this is not related to the
Urban Master/Court Master issue.*

Corpora says that a knight should have made every effort to learn and practice those skills desirable at and worthy of a civilized court...literature, dancing, music, heraldry, and chess....

I'd like to toss out the notion of courtly vs. non-courtly arts. My premise is that even if a knight of the Middle Ages did engage in cooking, brewing, armoring, bladesmithing, weaving, pottery, etc., he'd be darn sure to do it where no one could find out about it! Do not misunderstand, I am in deep awe of those with any of the above skills. I would favor the Laureldom of anyone who had both Peer-like demeanor and mastery of those skills, I just think that the arts criteria for Chivalry candidates should be different. We should look for music, dance, poetry, courtesy as an art-form, etc.

I guess I'm just not looking forward to sitting through another elevation of a stick-jock who brews his own beer.

—Adriana d'Orsay [Caid]

ROYALTY & FEASTS

I can't imagine why anyone would think it would be acceptable for royalty to delay a feast. In fact, correct protocol, at least in the case of a barony, is that the royalty is present as guests of the ruling noble. I have almost never seen this handled correctly.

I agree with Gyrth's comments on awarding AOA's [11:15]. I have seen him do it, in a crowded hall, rather than in court. I would wager it had ten times the impact to the new lord than the traditional method.

—William de Montegilt [Meridies]

I'm going to have to disagree with Ælflæd on the subject of Crown delaying feasts/starting without them [17:2]. there is a point at which the Crown's inconsiderate behaviour should be overruled by the needs of the other 300 people at the event. I've been to too many feasts where the Crown was tied up in a (fill in the blank) circle, and court and feast were delayed to as late as 10:00 p.m. The optimum solution in that

abbot, send greetings.

I, Lord Peregrine the Illuminator, am Seneschal of the Baronial Colleges of Nordleigh, Canton of the Barony of Nordskogen. I have served as herald and exchequer in my six years in this Society, and my other pursuits are poetry sewing, and illumination.

I, Michael Moore, run the St. Olaf Choral Music Library, and accompany dance classes at St. Olaf College. On my lunch hours, I do research at the library. My fiancée is Jennifer Bailey (the quietly stunning Lady Arianna Chiara Fiorucci, whom I occasionally allow to read my *ThinkWells* first).

Yes, when I describe myself in the SCA, there are three different people. Peregrine (at the level of skill he has) would not have left the monastery at Kells, while Lord Peregrine the Illuminator can't sit still long enough to get the paint wet (but...the autocrat needs help! I can't just sit here!). However, these three are all me.

situation is for the local ruling noble, autocrat, seneschal or other Influential Person to interrupt the meeting long enough to say "your Majesties, dinner is ready to be served; would you rather that we start serving without you, or would you prefer to recess this meeting until after dinner?" My personal Rule #8 is: If it is time to serve dinner, the meeting is adjourned.

—Tivar Moondragon [Ansteorra]

I understand your point Ælflæd [17:2], that cold food with "the King and Queen in place" is more authentic (and respectful of the crown) than going ahead and serving. I seem to recall at least one historian who claimed that Louis XIV never ate a hot meal because he was served on gold plates from kitchens distant from the courtly parts of his palaces.

Part of my problem is that it never would have occurred to me to be so inconsiderate of my people to keep the feast waiting until I arrived. Another part comes from the fact that the SCA is a social organization, people pay money for feasts, and the feast autocrat has an explicit obligation to make the best effort possible to feed them properly prepared unspoiled food. Also, because I work for a public health department I am too aware of the health risks present in food that has been allowed to cool to room temperature and then stay that way for a time, it is not a risk that I'd willingly run if I were responsible for the feast.

I'm probably as much as a royalist as you are (certainly we seem to share many of the same visions of what is involved), I guess I'm just too unimaginative to conceive of a proper King letting his arrogance/indifference interfere with his duty to his people (even though I'm quite aware that there have been and will again be individuals who do so).

It seems to me that you and Susannah Griffon [17:12] are arguing two points of view that are not really in conflict. Like you, I agree that a certain emphasis on regal dignity is needed a lot of the time; like her, I agree that royalty can take part in any activity and still be in royal character. The point that you make (and I absolutely agree with you) that others seem to overlook, is that the SCA illusion cannot survive where royalty is constantly dropping out of character. Having King Robert suddenly revert to Billy Bob in mid court or revel is a disastrous and (in my opinion) extremely unchivalrous thing for him to do. Sure, Henry V brawled, wenched and ran around with Falstaff and the gang, but there was NEVER any risk that he would suddenly become good ole Hank Plantagenate the cowboy party animal.

—Kevin Perigrinne [West]

As a subject: If I want a hot meal served promptly by a smiling waitress, I can go to my local Denny's, Bob's, Shoney's (fill in the mid-quality restaurant of your choice). I go to feasts to experience the sights, smells and sounds of the Current Middle Ages; actually *eating* is secondary.

As a Royal: I recall arriving at my own Coronation feast, extremely stressed, totally exhausted, and input-overloaded, to be informed (with a smirk) "Two minutes more and we were going to start without you." Was I just a teensy bit tempted to turn on my heel and leave?... Of course not (specious wide eyes)!

—Countess Adriana d'Orsay [Caid]

In defense of my original point, I never suggested that it was okay for royalty to be late, or that people should *want* to wait for them, only that in real life a wedding feast doesn't begin without the bride and groom, a banquet doesn't begin without the guest of honor, and a funeral doesn't begin without the widow, and *in the aspect of a feast which is ceremonial* (because it isn't just any meal, a coronation feast, or midwinter feast, or Twelfth-night feast, or feast to honor the new crown prince and princess) it is wrong (improper, inauthentic) to give the clock precedence over the king. If the king is a little bit late, let's assume he was legitimately detained doing something to benefit us all. If he's more than a little late, let's assume he's a jerk and get irritated, but let's wait as long as possible anyway.

—Ælfled of Duckford [Outlands]

KINGSHIP

To all Kings and Queens at this moment and in the future: Being able to read the letters which come to *ThinkWell* in their entirety, including the "not for publication" parts, I feel it my duty to make the following point:

Think for one moment about the effect of giving a person an award. If you're trying to do someone a little favor (or a big one), or trying to appease someone, do it in private. Give them a big fat compliment; a fun, showy little task; a gift; let them sit in your throne for a minute but *don't give awards which are not absolutely, objectively deserved*.

When any award is given it's like throwing a pebble into a lake. Depending on the conditions, the size of the rock, the speed and angle, etc. it can have a small, quiet effect or can make waves to the far shore and back. The larger the award/rock, the greater the effect.

If you make a peer despite the consensus of the remainder of that order, you harm that person; you harm the order; you harm your reputation; you harm the contentment of the people of your kingdom. By this piece of damage, whether large or small, your kingdom's status among the neighboring kingdoms is harmed. Whether the effect is perceptible to the eye or only to scientific instruments, the creator of the wave is the guy who threw the rock.

There is no question that Royal Majesties everywhere have the right by Corpora to create peers after consultation with members of the order, and to make most other awards without consulting *anyone*. Being royalty is a tricky maze. It's a test of maturity, responsibility, and forward thinking. Some people hit more dead ends than others.

I realize this is what is known in English as "preaching to the choir," but there are TW readers whose faith in the system has been severely shaken by watching kings and queens make selfish, thoughtless decisions which affect the kingdom forever. We have non-peers ready to quit and peers not willing to go to peerage circles.

If you're not royalty but you come in contact with those who are, if you're asked to advise please try to take in the whole picture, and base your advice on what would be best for the whole kingdom and its honor, rather than what's expedient on a certain weekend.

—Ælfled of Duckford [Outlands]

On the cost of being Crown: [14:21] Robin of Gilwell is right about the need to consider what you would have spent anyway needing to be taken into account when calculating the cost of a reign.

When Valens and I became Crown, our expenses actually decreased! When he won, he was Earl Marshal and I was Kingdom Chronicler. We were traveling to events almost every weekend, sending out lots of mail, and on the phone nearly every evening. When we became Crown and resigned our Great Offices, we had only one set of phone calls to make and less mail to send. At that time our kingdom had (still has) only a tiny budget for postage for the Great Offices, and nothing else. We have a small travel budget for the Crown. And as Robin mentions, complimentary site and feast tickets help out on the expenses.

He is also right about garb. If a Crown plans carefully what new clothes they have made, they will have a wardrobe to draw on for years to come. It is an investment, and most of us make some kind of investment in new clothes each year. I sew and am addicted to new clothes. My greatest costuming change was that I had to dress like a lady and leave my boy-clothes in the closet. I *had* to have more dresses. A couple costuming friends and I went through my (extensive) fabric collection and spent a weekend sewing a wardrobe of mix and match undergowns and overgowns. We also made a couple new outfits for Valens. Luciana and Liriel made me a wonderful Italian Renaissance gown for Coronation and I made Valens a Charlemagne costume. For our de-Coronation I made a velvet and fur gown for Valens and hauled a similar gown from a few years earlier out of the closet.

The fur was a Coronation gift. The only thing I spent much on was trim and the fabric for Valens' undergown, and I shopped for bargains for those things!

I have a tough time understanding when I hear about Crowns spending \$1000 for clothes for a reign. I can't imagine someone who has nothing at all to wear having been in the Society long enough to get good enough to win Crown. Give me \$1000 and I can dress two or three sets of Crowns!

—Susannah Griffon [Calontir]

When Atlantia went kingdom, Gyrth and I didn't think it was nearly ready. (This is not deep secret; we were quite vocal about our feelings at the time.) But there was this gas crisis, see, and it was hard to drive long distances because you could only buy gasoline on alternate days, and the East begat Atlantia. We had our growing pains, but in the long run, I'm glad it happened. Now, if only someone would tell me why the East and the Middle are still holding so tenaciously to territories that virtually can't be administered successfully. Between the costs of mailing, the impossibility of knowing everyone, even everyone active, the difficulty of finding officers who are willing to juggle so many groups, the fact that it is no longer possible for the royalty to visit every group during a reign, even if they split up and travel separately every weekend, and all the other problems inherent in the size of the East and the Middle, I wonder why anyone fights in Crown Tourneys or volunteers for kingdom offices.

—Melisande de Belvoir [Atlantia]

REVOLVING-DOOR REIGNS (DEJA REX)

I'd say that if you're the sort of indefatigable visionary who always has something to offer, and the kingdom *en masse* feels you're a genuine "force for good," then go for it; in the long run your virtues will outweigh any sense of "deja Rex." On the other hand, if you're just some Sword Savant wracking up hats, or too paranoid to let go, then no number of trips down Regality Lane will legitimize The Vain Glory Factor.

—Dietrich von Vogelsang [Caid]

I'll have to talk to my apprentice (Kirk FitzDavid) about this one! Kirk asks [17:22] "Why should anyone need to be back on the throne time after time?" "Need"??? I think this is a bad word choice. I don't know of any of the Crowns Calontir has had who truly felt they *needed* to reign. But then we have only had three duchesses and three dukes so far (both our current king and prince are reruns and will add to our list of dukes), and all of them had long times between reigns.

—Susannah Griffon [Calontir]

Uh oh. It appears there are a great number of people out there who resent fighters repeating themselves on the throne. I can't defend it without sounding self-serving. I hope that if someone were preparing to fight in Crown who would not serve the kingdom well if they won, then the sitting Crown would steer that person out of the tournament before it begins. To do that, the Crown must know how the populace feels. The Crown can refuse entry if they find the prospective fighter unacceptable. It takes guts to tell a duke no, but it has been done.

As for me, if there is resentment out there concerning my times on the throne, I would hope people would tell me. I don't bite. Much.

—John the Bearkiller [Meridies]

GRAND THEATRE

The SCA can be Grand Theatre; when it is it can be a glorious experience of the "The Dream" sort. More often than not the Grand Theatre results from a complete lack of consciousness that you are MAKING G.T. I've seen a number of attempts to deliberately create Grande Theatre that failed by their clear artificiality and rehearsed feel. And I'm afraid some of us (self most especially included) are far more suited for Vaudeville/English Music Hall than the Olde Vic.

—Geoffrey d'Ayr of Montalban [East]

Theatre is great as long as it is/seems natural. When it starts seeming phony, the populace picks up on it quick and the Crown loses respect and credibility.

—Susannah Griffon [Calontir]

FORMALITY/TITLES

This is one of those SCA problems which is effected by both regional and persona cultural differences. [14:2/3] To say that you want royalty to act like royalty is a meaningless state-

ment. I want royalty to act like northern Europeans from before the 12th century and who are from the East or Atlantia. Certain kingdoms are much happier bowing and scraping to the royalty. I, for one, never bow to furniture and, probably, manifest a great deal less deference to royalty than would be thought minimal in many of the kingdoms across the Great River. It also happens that I have an earlier persona and do not regard most kings as heaven sent or as that much grander than me. Of course, I do not remember if I felt significantly differently before I was one.

—Gyrth Oldcastle [Atlantia]

On the subject of royalty being "human" vs. "regal," my inclination is toward regal. Few things spoil it faster than seeing the king on his throne with his crown tilted back on his head like a gimme cap, one leg cocked over the arm of the throne and a can of beer in his hand. On the other hand, I have no objection to the king enjoying himself within certain reasonable limits of decorum (or outside them in the privacy of his own camp).

One of the things that hooked me on the SCA was the king's behaviour at my very first event. This was in A.S. X, when Atenveldt stretched from the California border to the Atlantic Ocean. To the best of my knowledge, this was the first time a king had ever visited this part of the world. His Majesty was very dignified and regal throughout the event, but on Sunday morning he invited all the populace to attend him at the throne, for an informal question-and-answer session. We spent about two hours learning about the kingdom of Atenveldt, what it was like being king, etc. It didn't make him any less regal, but it did make him more human.

—Tivar Moondragon [Ansteorra]

CROWNS WEARING REGALIA OF VARIOUS ORDERS

It has become customary in Ansteorra for the Queen to wear a White Scarf as patroness of the Order. Sometimes the King wears one as well, but not usually. I believe this custom is also being practiced in the Outlands and Trimaris, where they also have White Scarves.

—Tivar Moondragon [Ansteorra]

Being a person who asks "What if—?" on a regular basis and about almost everything, I confess I have considered the remote possibility of becoming queen. In Ansteorra the queen is the protector of the Order of the White Scarf, and as such, wears one. But I am a cadet to a member of the order. Would it be presumptuous of me to wear it? Would it be rude not to? Would it be ridiculous to wear both? Would I remove the red scarf for the duration of the reign?

—Æthelyan of Moondragon [Ansteorra]

Whether and what symbols kings wear came up just recently. A former king whose peerage is knighthood said that on the days when he was going to make a Laurel or Pelican he sometimes wore the medallion he was going to use in court later. The concept of the king and queen being the principals of the orders was taught to me in Atenveldt, and I guess I believe it. The really exciting moment in the conver-

sation came when someone asked "What if the king isn't a knight and wears a belt and chain around?" "He has the right to do that," was the response of the knight.

What people have the right to do isn't always the best thing to do, I'll bet. Personally, I object to a king who isn't a Pelican wearing a Pelican medallion. If there's a pelican or laurel motif on his cloak or his chair or his crown or whatever—that I wouldn't care about.

I would prefer kings wear *no* peerage symbols. Isn't there enough gee-gaw stuff to mark him as the king without belts and chains and medallions to muddle it all up?

None of this applies, in my mind, to the Queen of the Outlands wearing a white scarf, pinned on with a rose pin (hey, she might not be a member of the order of the rose yet!), which is indeed the tradition here, and the members of the Order of the White Scarf put it on her and then she gives it back to them at the end of the reign.

—Ælfled of Duckford [Outlands]

CORONETS ON HELMS

Shortly after I was made a Court Baron, I attached a baronial coronet to my helm. First, it dressed up an otherwise rather scruffy-looking helm; and second, since I'm not that good in armored combat, I figured the extra intimidation factor couldn't hurt. I have seen a few other such helms in Ansteorra, but they are not common.

On the other hand, I've never even thought about putting one on my fencing mask until now. I think that's because fencing mask is a piece of modern equipment that is required for safety reasons, whereas a helm (with or without coronet) is perfectly period. It would be like painting a full heraldic achievement on an ice chest or car door—yes it's pretty, but it doesn't disguise the basic mundanity of the object.

—Tivar Moondragon [Ansteorra]

BARONIAL MATTERS

Ælfled's explanation of the brother/sister team of baron/baroness in Loch Salann sounds *so* genuinely medieval...the king wanted a fighter to be baron, so he found a male relative to reign with the lady. Sexist, maybe, but genuine.

—Nige of the Cleftlands [East]

PROVINCES/MEGA SHIRES

I can see no reason for provinces. You get all the responsibilities of a barony (paperwork, officers, maintenance of high activity) with none of the advantages (local awards, pageantry of courts, etc.). You're a shire with more paperwork. We have three provinces in the East. One doesn't count, since it's the capital, Østgardr, the *sui-generis* Crown Province. Of the others, one converted from a barony after some nasty politics, and the other is composed of ornery independent Yankees who still remember the Redcoats. Both seem lousy reasons for avoiding a local representative of the Crown.

—Steffan ap Cynnedd [East]

I lived in a province for more than ten years and find that

they tend to lack focus. It's hard to get pumped up over a seneschal. Also the seneschal has to wear all the hats—good guy, bad guy, leader (yet in a way, follower) and it's a lot for one person.

Also, you don't have the pomp and circumstance, regalia and so on (which is an important part of the medieval "feel") that a baron(ess) can provide. Only a bureaucrat.

It seems that having local royalty who lead (not rule), do the good guy things, can keep the group together and provide direction and focus, while the seneschal can do the implementation stuff. It splits up the job and makes life easier for both. I've seen it work well in Vinhold, Westermarck and Darkwood, while (the Province of) Southern Shores has its ups and downs depending on whether or not there's a strong seneschal. Even then, the strong ones are eventually [considered to be] pushy. They get tired and start forgetting to take off the bad guy hat. The weak ones are hated because they don't do anything. So the group is up and then down.

—Thomas Buttethorn [Caid (Southern Reaches)]

HOSPITALITY +

There are few organizations in which by being a member you are welcomed wherever you travel. The SCA is one of these. I would like to share the experience I had with the SCA when, for training, I was sent on the road for over three months in various southeastern and western states. I started with the USDA as a veterinary medical officer shortly before Pennsic. Due to travel/moving restrictions I left home with the standard mundane clothing and supplies and one small bag containing three changes of garb. I was unable to take camping or feast gear with me, but I was showered with assistance and loaner items by the people I met. I also improvised by borrowing (for the weekend) pillows and bedspreads from hotels. I did confuse the maids somewhat.

The treatment and friendships I received while on the road made what could have been a homesick nightmare instead a chance to meet new people, get and give ideas and make valuable friends.

I spent most of my time in Meridies, Grifhons Shadow (Columbus, Mississippi) and Grey Niche (Memphis, Tennessee) but I also attended a local event in Ansteorra, at the Shadowlands (College Station, Texas). Among the experiences I had, I was honored to attend the Meridies coronation and observe the ceremony they have for fealty. The traditions of Atlantia are sufficiently different that I did feel like a foreigner traveling to a new land. It was a wonderful and enriching chance to observe the similarities and differences between the kingdoms in the SCA. My discoveries were not limited to observances. The open exchange of ideas with other people gave me a chance to see not just what was different, but how it was done and thought of differently.

I was not surprised that the equestrian activities were more organized and had a more active participation than in Atlantia. I hope that in spite of the high cost of having livestock in the more populated areas of Atlantia we will be able to encourage an equestrian event and that this in turn may attract more members with horses and horse interests.

Among the other jewels I stumbled across while on the road was *ThinkWell*. I enjoyed reading back issues and talking

about the material contained within with the people who introduced me to the publication. In fact I was so inspired by the people I met I wanted to give something positive back to the SCA at large. So often we discuss the pitfalls and areas that need improvement concerning the SCA and life in general. I do enjoy brainstorming to come up with better ways to do things but I want to change gears this once.

While I don't recommend going on the road under the tender ministrations of the federal government for three months, I do recommend looking up the SCA wherever and whenever you travel away from your kingdom. Aside from church, I know of no other organization whose members will welcome you into their homes and social life with no other reference than membership. The SCA is exceptional at this and will not only give you the shirts off their backs but their spare set of tableware.

—Lady Lora Leigh [Atlantia]¹

Believe it or not, when I first joined the Society I was quiet as a mouse for almost a year. It was a year when I spent a lot of time with the King and Queen and with a lot of the other Movers and Shakers in the East in those days, and I learned an enormous amount by absorption; when you're quiet, people will sometimes all but forget you're there and say all kinds of things in front of you that you might never otherwise hear. By the time I opened my mouth, I was fairly well informed, and the things I said seemed to have had some value to my audience. On the other hand, I have met some newcomers who are so excited and enthusiastic about the SCA that they don't really stop to find out what it actually is before they start recruiting people and trying to explain it all to them. In my experience, that's where we have problems teaching new members—where they're learning their SCA from people who are insufficiently learned in it themselves. I think honeymoons (or quiet times, if you prefer) are both desirable and, in some sense, necessary for successful integration into our rather arcane subculture.

—Melisande de Belvoir [Atlantia]

I almost didn't have innocent years. I joined a newly-formed canton at the University of Texas in Austin, and within two weeks was Mistress of Arts. I moved out of the area for a brief time eight months later, and returned after another four to find that most of the members active had forgotten me (our paths had rarely crossed) or didn't know me at all. I lost my 'innocence' a year and a half later by

¹ Lora Leigh joined the SCA in 1989 our time. In her time she is an 11th century Saxon who prospered in London before the arrival of William the Bastard. She is the daughter of a shepherd and is married to a tavernkeeper in London. In her spare time she brews wine and while not in persona, enjoys practicing Middle Eastern dance. Lora Leigh's alter ego, Laura Lee Wright, is a veterinarian for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). She works as the inspector in charge at Halal meats and food, a Muslim sheep, goat and cattle slaughter operation in Bladenboro, North Carolina. At the time she fabricated her persona she never thought she would be herding goats with Muslim men. She lives in Elizabethtown, North Carolina. Her dwelling is on the outskirts of the Barony of Windmaster Hill, located within the Kingdom of Atlantia.

helping to autocrat a Twelfth-night. (And was bitten by the bug—I frequently see Tivar giving me a look that says, “No, you're not going to do another event yet.”)

—Æthelyan of Moondragon [Ansteorra]

OLDE PHOLKS / POINT OF VIEW

Ah, to remember when things were new to the Whole world, when I was the first to tell anyone about Hildegard's music, and when it was my duty to tell everyone the puns I heard, since no one had heard them before!

Thank heaven that time is past, and thank heaven I can relive it through the newfolk who join the Society.

I am one of the “olde folk,” even after six years. In a group mostly based on college students, six years is unheard of! As soon as I move out, I'll be back to being youngster, and that's fine. But until then, sonny, let me tell you some stories...

—Lord Peregrine Illuminator [Middle]

EARNED ADVANTAGE AND YIELDING

In the East, Atlantia, and Meridies I have often offered a wounded opponent an opportunity to yield. No one has ever yielded in a tournament, that I recall.

Bearkiller's comments [17:3] about arms being targeted in Meridies are correct, and I also use the tactic frequently. I have seen arms bruised here, but never an injury. As he says, we hit more lightly here, which I consider to be a Good Thing. As it happens, I am somewhat sensitive to arm injuries in the lists.

One thing I do NOT like in Meridies is the custom of continuing to attack while a person who has received a telling blow to a limb is changing position, e.g. dropping to the knees or trying to place an arm behind him. I am not referring to inadvertently finishing a combination, but rather intentional attack. While recognizing that customs differ and that I am a newcomer to this kingdom, I consider it the nadir of discourtesy.

—William de Montegilt [Meridies]

In Ansteorra, it is customary for a fighter who has lost a limb to be asked to yield. Generally (60-70% of the time) the disadvantaged fighter *will* yield. Is this common in other kingdoms? If the fighter does not yield, his opponent will generally assume the same disadvantage (i.e. drop his shield or fight from his knees). Level of experience is also a factor: if a duke loses a limb to a comparative newbie, no one is surprised if the newbie doesn't assume the same disadvantage.

—Tivar Moondragon [Ansteorra]

Ælfæd says “I've seen many guys win from their knees, and I would hate for it to be considered unchivalrous to try.” [17:3] I don't consider it unchivalrous to try to win from a disadvantage; rather I consider it a large showing of courage to do so. What I *do* consider unchivalrous is to pound on someone who obviously cannot give as good as he's getting. I have a lot of respect for opponents who refuse to yield when I or someone else give them the option. But I will give them

the option whenever it seems (to me) that I have a significant advantage over my opponent. My reasoning on this is that I have no desire to kill or permanently disable my opponent—who is also my friend—just to win a bout. If he yields to me with a somewhat more minor wound that can be repaired, I have demonstrated the same amount of skill—as has he—and we *both* live to tell about it.

—Æthelyan of Moondragon [Ansteorra]

In Meridies, there is no accepted standard for yielding advantage, though there are one or two perverse maniacs out there who flop recklessly about or toss arms willy-nilly aside at the slightest opportunity. Generally, each fighter makes that assessment for him/herself in the heat of battle, and nobody is thought the worse of for retaining an advantage fairly earned.

—Edward of Glastonburh [Meridies]

In Meridies, heralds will sometimes announce “an act of chivalry” when a fighter gives up a limb to make a bout more even. For me, it’s a personal decision and I don’t like it mentioned as a “chivalrous” thing. If it is announced like that, it implies unchivalrous conduct if you *don’t* give up a limb to a crippled opponent. I’ve heard it announced in the Midrealm as a “point of honor.” That’s a little better. I do it out of respect for my opponent and because I’m having fun. Sometimes, I don’t. It is my opinion that it is acceptable to retain all earned advantages. It is also acceptable to give up an advantage (it can look great when it’s done). Either way, it’s a fighter’s own decision, and chivalry has nothing to do with it. Every fighter has their own motivation; I respect all of them as long as a fighter fights fairly.

—John the Bearkiller [Meridies]

ACCEPTING BLOWS

William the Lucky feels that we are coming out of a period of heavy counting. While I agree with Brion that blow registration comes in cycles, I do not agree that it is decreasing. There was a recent letter in the Caidan newsletter from their Earl Marshal about a rash of forearm fractures and an exhortation to wear vambraces. This is not a good sign, eh?

It IS possible to break the cycle. In 1976, in the East, a very wise king named Alaric von Rotstern held a “Council of Chivalry” at a big 4th of July fighting event. everyone who wished was allowed to speak once. The topic was blow escalation. The result of this consciousness-raising session was that blow registration in the East dropped sharply for about 18 months. I would suggest that this example could be followed elsewhere, and often.

—William de Montegilt [Meridies]

HARDWOOD SHAFTS

I LOVED my hardwood spear shaft! I still have it. It is perfectly safe and, being ash, would fail safely. Despite this, Earl Richard of Raefen, a forester by trade from here in Meridies, absolutely convinced me that hardwood shafts were a bad idea. His utterly compelling logic is that while some folks can identify wood as ash or another hardwood, your average fighter is going to go to a hardware store and end up

with a pine closet pole. And once the tape is on it, who will know? The guy at the hardware store won’t (I grew up in one and I wouldn’t have). The fighter just impaled by the broken pole probably will, though.

—William de Montegilt [Meridies]

WEAPONS

The customs for this vary by kingdom, and cannot be thought of as right or wrong. In Meridies, armigers are also given the right to bear arms (weapons) in the Presence. I expect this was an early protocol garble, but is the custom here.

In the East and Atlantia, the custom used to be (I’ve been away a while) that anyone in fealty to the Crown could bear arms in the Presence. This would automatically include the knights, but not necessarily the other peers. It would be confusing in Meridies, as virtually the entire populace swears fealty.

One thing that is NOT funny is some jerk who has a dirk in every orifice taking ten minutes to shake them all out. It’s been done (like probably in A.S. I and too often since then)!

—William de Montegilt [Meridies]

ABOUT WARS...

Uh oh! Someone is knocking wars again! [Melisande de Belvoir, 15:2] Them’s fighting words!

I like wars much better than tourneys, having participated in nearly 40 of them, from Lochac to Pennsic. I find a great deal more camaraderie at wars. We fight all day and party and tell war stories at night and it doesn’t matter what side you’re on...you only fight your friends.

I find that while wars are competitive on a large scale, there is less on an individual scale—much less ego and “prima donaism.” Yes, you fight to win, but also to have fun. You will find fighters at a war chatting between battles, even with the other side during a hold. At a tourney, many competitors, especially the contenders, talk very little, as they are psyching up for the next fight and in their own headspace. Maybe they’re hoping the knights are watching. Nobody ever became a knight because of their war fighting.¹

You have no brave charges at a tourney, no gallant last stands, no terrain battles, castle, ambushes, rivers, fords, woods fighting, mixed combat, unit or army tactics, strategy, no holding a bridge alone against an army. Great fighters always do better at wars than less experienced fighters but the situation does tend to even things out somewhat.

People who go to wars mostly do it for the same reason: They like wars (or in the case of the big wars—the shopping). There is a greater commonality among all present of feeling and purpose.

Honour is the big one. I feel that there is an even greater need for honour in a war. Because there is so much going on at once and it is so easy to hurt someone, not feel a blow, make a mistake in making a kill, etc., we need to be more careful what we do and give the other person more latitude. The situation is in a greater state of flux and confusion, the rules are more

¹ Editorial comment: There are people in the Outlands who wish that no one had ever become a knight because of his war fighting.

relaxed so the need for honour is greater.

I have appreciated it when someone who *could* legally have sent me into next Tuesday with a glaive from the side didn't, but put the weapon in front of my face and told me I was dead, and I've tried to do the same. I killed someone from the front that way once when he was heavily engaged with someone else and didn't have an icecube's chance in hell to protect himself above the shoulder. Why clobber the poor sucker when you have him dead to rights?

Besides I'm a war-junkie and they are more habit-forming than chocolate, and more period.

—Thomas Buttethorn [Caid (Southern Reaches)]

I fear I must disagree with my dear friend Melisande. I consider SCA wars to be enormous fun. I also consider tournament fighting to be enormous fun. They are two very different skill sets. Tournament fighting requires individual discipline, and the devotion to the particular art form in use. Successful war combat relies more on group discipline and tactical sense. (It is nice, but not necessary, to have the God of the Shield Wall on your side.) And while tournament fighting was popular in the Middle Ages, it was war that was considered the ultimate test of a knight's valor and prowess. If you will allow me a stereotype, I find that the absolute top tournament fighters in the Society seem to like tournaments better than wars, and often fight in wars only from a sense of obligation. Not true of everyone, of course.

—William de Montegilt [Meridies]

Yves Fortanier's closing comment [16:6] on striking from behind (advocating it if excessive force is avoided) reminded me that early in WK history some war games were tried with blows from behind allowed. Mostly they were successful for two reasons:

1. Because they were war *games* with sides made up of participants from various realms (we paired off by equivalent skill and armament) the adrenaline and emotional level was more like a melee than that of an "Us vs Them" polarized war.
2. If your opponent didn't notice/acknowledge your blow, the rule was then NOT to hit him again, but to use the get-their-attention-and-tell-them drill that is used currently.

I have never been in or marshalled a polarized war where I could in good conscience have advocated this approach; the percentage of over-adrenalized, hate-the-enemy indoctrinated and not experienced enough to stay in control individuals is simply too high.

—Kevin Perigryne [West]

I loathe many features of SCA wars because of the way in which they foster SCA nationalism. This brother duke thinks that the "team" includes us all.¹ Way back, when I had some influence on this sort of thing, I tried to persuade the Middle Royalty (Mel and I were the Eastern Royalty) to drop the whole WAR shtick and declare a big tournament for Pennsic VII. I tried real hard. I did not succeed then and I would not succeed now. I used to think it was because too many of us

titled types wanted to be Field Marshals, or something. But over the years, I have come to realize that it is the troops, as it were, who most want to have, and win, wars. This is where the greatest outcry comes from.

—Gyrth Oldcastle [Atlantia]

The most important activity for most period nobles was war for one reason (excuse) or another. Wars involved, and brought together, people from a wider range of places and social levels than anything else, except perhaps the Catholic church. Wars were more likely to have an effect on the lives of more people than any other activity. Wars aided the spread of knowledge and helped civilization grow as it did.

Of course people who are re-creating the Middle Ages and Renaissance period will focus on wars. The people we are imitating focussed on wars!

—Susannah Griffon [Calontir]

Susannah, might it be that the historians who wrote (until recently, perhaps) told us the history of our culture by jumping from one war to the next, skipping the stuff between?

—Ælfæd of Duckford [Outlands]

I'd much rather attend a war event than a long event devoted to several tournaments. People can get into the spirit of a war—even non-fighters can identify with the theme and support their "side." The war theme gives a unity to the event, tying it all together.

I like to autocrat events, and I have a lot more fun doing wars.

Speaking of autocratting wars, I am doing Lilies War again this year.

—Susannah Griffon [Calontir]

...and ARTS POINTS

I agree that the warpoint for arts is a pretty odd idea. I think there should be one for shopping. That is, after all, the biggest reason to endure Pennsic.

—Dorren of Ashwell [East]

I like the sort of event which "won't get a crowd" [to Ælfæd, 16:8]. Events are created (I hope) to allow opportunities to use, display, or attempt new things and practices. Wars are for war tactics. Tourneys are for individual fighting skill. A&S events are for the "gentler pursuits." Revels are for social interaction. Do we *have* to lump them together *all* the time?

In my neck of the woods (okay, hill country), central Ansteorra, I've heard the term "cooky-cutter event" to describe (usually derogatively), "Let's see. We need a generic heavy tourney, a rapier tourney, an A&S display, something for the archers, a feast, a court, games...is that everything? Now, on Sunday..." But what gets lost is an event such as our dance symposium, Eisteddfod (bardic event), Bordermarch Melees (storming a castle and field melees), and lots of other narrower-focus events. I find that at events that try to cater to everyone, some of the activities get shunted to 9:00 or 10:00 in the evening—which is hardly fair to those people who have worked to make them something special. Most

¹ This is a reference to 14:1. This letter has been in a safe place for a few months; sorry. —ælfæd

people have accepted that the major activity at Crown is a heavy tournament. People who attend it are there to see who the Heirs will be, not to get the tourney "over with" and go on to the other stuff.

I do like events with lots to do, but let's try not to make them all like that; rather, let's put some of that energy into making a few activities really meaningful to those who are interested in them. Bardic competitions shouldn't have to wait until most people are too tired to care.

—Æthelstan of Moondragon [Ansteorra]

FOCUS

The history of our Society is all very interesting, but when it gets to the point at which we are talking/singing/studying about our own accomplishments more than we do about the period we are theoretically trying to emulate, then it's a problem. I love a good story as much as anyone, and by its very nature, a story told by someone who was "really there" is going to be more colorful than one made up around an historical event. However, I play in the SCA to find out what it might have been like to live in the Middle Ages, so couldn't we sort of transfer some of this first-hand color into otherwise "real" historical situations? Maybe this is the custom elsewhere; maybe it is here and I haven't been listening enough. It just seems like I hear a lot of people talking about our own history as though it was all we were about, and very few people saying anything that relates to "actual" history.

Should I be talking? I don't tell stories at all...

—Istvan Kostka [Calontir]

"MEDIEVAL"

Ah, what a lovely term "medieval" is. The SCA uses it to describe the structure and mores of Western European societies roughly from early Merovingian to High Renaissance culture. It is to be expected that when two people from the extremes of this range get in an argument, it boils down to: "I'm medieval!" "No, I'm medieval!"

We have a Tudor civil service grafted upon a primitive sort of vassalage which guarantees conflicts between the Crown (early types—responsible to themselves) and the Seneschallate (late types—responsible to the [Society Seneschall]/CEO). The late types recently tried to recreate the notion of "knights of the robe," a perfectly appropriate [late] "medieval" thing to do, although most SCA members, including myself, considered it an obnoxious joke. Okay, I'm a knight, I have the opinions suitable thereto.

But what about the geography vs. fealty debate? Should the location of my residence define my "nationality," a notion which which only became prominent in the late medieval/early Renaissance period? If I move to California, why can I not retain my Atenveldt fealty, although thereby forfeiting any right to participate in the government of Caid? That seems much more "medieval" to me. We all take fealty seriously. Should fealty be subservient to the convenience of the Registrar's database management program?

My persona, a dream of Malory's that didn't get into *Le Morte d'Arthur*, is loose enough to stretch from Gildas to Guy Fawkes with a stop at Gormenghast in between, although

I tend to earlier epochs since I make my family's garb and I'm no tailor. But my taste for early style "medieval" isn't just a matter of the convenience of T-tunics. Early kings traveled with their courts in attendance and their treasure in the wagon train. Got a problem with the alphabet? Just point to Alcuin and tell him to create a new one. But kingdoms got larger, and populations grew, and delegation became necessary, and the work became larger than one single mind could encompass. Thus, the middle-to-late Middle Ages also saw the invention of bureaucracy. The Domesday Book is its first relic.

Now bureaucracy may be perfectly period, but frankly, I get enough of it when I renew my driver's license. I much prefer stepping into something completely alien: the classic pyramidal structure. I'm waving the flag for the X to XII centuries. Having become a knight, I am now in the middle of the feudal pyramid, on the bottom no longer. But for those who do not bear arms, the later periods certainly offer much larger scope for play.

One can only hope that when talk turns to what is "medieval" and what is not, the first question to be asked will be "Where and what century?"

—Gareth of Bloodwine Gorge [Atenveldt]

AUTHENTICITY

"Not as it was..."—What a sappy excuse! Don't we want to get the feeling of what it was really like? Isn't the opportunity to understand what people back then experienced part of why we do this re-creation thing? The most special moments of my SCA years are the ones when everything felt right and it seemed "real." I think that within reason, we should all try to achieve that feel at our events by being as authentic as we can afford/manage/stand.

In reply to Istvan's comment [16:17], I think one has to determine how much historical accuracy to maintain based upon practical considerations. Is this a pavilion for display, or one you and all your worldly goods will live in for a week hundreds of miles from home? Will you throw your garb in the automatic washer, take it to the (expensive) dry cleaner, or wash it in a stream? What is the significance and end use of the thing you are making or doing? When modern materials and methods are safer, healthier, cheaper, and available, there are good practical reasons for using them. Timeliness is also an important consideration. Do you want to make those leather boots this week or wait three years for the period tanning method to be complete?

Ælfled, I think you have had a brilliant inspiration in your theory about our "medieval theme parties." That is how I have looked at the SCA for a long time, I just didn't have the right words for it. Thank you.

For a while it bothered me when I realized that I was never going to be able to speak Middle English or Old French—and that even if I could nobody would understand me! Then I gave up on that notion and decided to just create the best illusion that I could, within reason.

True Confessions: I put velcro on the doors of my period pavilion—even a drunken knight can get that closed. I wear my glasses because I can't see without them. I bring paper towels, kleenex, toilet paper and plastic trash bags to camping events for sanitary reason, but hide them in a wicker

trunk. I make sure everyone with me has a period-looking drinking vessel, so the cans can be disposed of quickly. If someone with me is injured at an event, I will use first-aid cream and a band-aid—not a poultice of weeds held on with a rag. It is just not that hard to use common sense and do the practical thing as discreetly as possible.

Time, safety and money are not really issues when it comes to my wood-carving. I only use period type tools and do all the work by hand. It is slow, less precise, hard work...and very satisfying (not to mention being a great demo).

—Susannah Griffon [Calontir]

Istvan raises an interesting issue [16:17]: Granted that mastering period technique and tools is a goal worthy of praise, should attaining a period result using modern methods (e.g., using a fountain pen to do calligraphy) disqualify the result for consideration? My own feeling is that it should not, for a number of reasons:

1. Use of modern methods and equipment does not mean that the person does not know and have the ability to use period methods and equipment.
2. The SCA esthetic and (apparent) Order of the Laurel standards allow the use of modern over-the-counter materials, so long as the result is period or appears so, therefore use of modern methods and equipment out of sight (and site) to produce a period result doesn't clash with the esthetic or violate the standards.
3. Since the SCA and the creation of artifacts/performances for it is not a full time job for most of us, the use of time saving equipment and techniques is often a necessity if anything at all is to be produced.

How do the Laurels feel about this?

—Kevin Perigryne [West]

Has anyone actually found documentation for bunny fur bikinis? I've found plenty for bare breasts. Blond Samurai and Amerinds don't bother me (remember, I'm from a barony that believes in Prince Madoc of Wales); I see them as a form or equal opportunity to try out a persona (or just a costume) from a different culture. The bunny fur costumes bore me partly because I just don't enjoy the Conan/Red Sonja school of fantasy. I can't escape the feeling that this type of fantasy is modern, rather than "period." (Fantasy, like any other artistic genre, has a history.) Master Cadfan makes the best argument for finding a context that I've seen so far, but the folks I've seen dress that way don't look much like the illustrations of wild men and women of the period.

I've judged at lots of Meridian A&S competitions, and there are always a few entries that are wonderful examples of a particular art/craft in a modern context, but don't always fit nicely into a truly historical one. For example, a beautiful drawing of King Henry V in battle might be on one hand a perfectly period topic, but if it drawn in a modern style, the judges may not rate the piece as highly as it might rate in a non-SCA competition. The question always remains creative, or archeological qualities. Ultimately, judging is always subjective. I'd like to see more category opportunities in A&S contests for the kinds of things that tend to fall through the cracks—like songs about the SCA, SCA graphic design and illustration, fabulous fakes, and disguises for

"mundane" objects. I have sponsored contests in some of these areas myself. Another thing that judges can do is make positive suggestions on how a particular entrant can orient their skills toward a more "period" product. Also, on the other side of the authenticity coin, it's not an easy thing to convince judges that a new theory or interpretation of how something was made is legitimate. Document the hell out of it and present your case clearly when going up against conventional wisdom.

—Margala of Dovedale [Meridies]

It seems to me that there is a kind of authenticity that we seldom, if ever, discuss. This is the authenticity of spirit and of style. The fact is, we seldom discuss style at all when we are talking about the SCA, and that is what Y'r H'bl' S'v't is in it for. You can serve your grandma's roast chicken recipe if you must, and so long as it is beautifully presented and displayed on a silver tray to the accompaniment of fife and sackbut, I will much prefer it to Capon y-Stewed on a cheap plastic dish that is banged unceremoniously down on my table—often before the King is fed. If we are going to play the game, then why not actually play it? When I joined, people would make at least some attempt at courtly behavior; I guess they just didn't know better.

—William Fitzgerald [East]

Several years ago, I met a professional in my field, and she assumed the traditional pose of disdain when she learnt of my affiliation. When I asked why she reacted that way, she told me it was because of the nonchalant "Not as it was but as it should have been" attitude she saw in our arts and sciences.

The attitude as she understood it was that the people in period did not make things, in this case dance, as they "should have been."

It's a quirky viewpoint, but there it is.

—Sion Andreas o Wynedd [Middle]

I enjoy looking at old pictures of SCA events, not because I see people that I know, but because I see how far we have come, as a group. With the passage of time, our research has improved and built upon itself. Our tourney fields are no longer littered with freon can helmets and carpet armor, and while around the campfire the mainstay might still be filked versions of summer camp songs; it is not difficult (at least not if you know where to look) to find someone singing original tunes written in a period style, or written and sung in persona, or even written about SCA history itself.

The most promising aspect of this process of maturity is the increasing importance and emphasis on historical accuracy. This emphasis is subtle, and almost exclusively on an individual basis, but it has manifested itself in the formation of the Companies of St. George and St. Michael, the Tenans of Northshield, various and sundry period and/or in-persona encampments, and an SCA-spin-off group, the Kingdom of Acre (which, as I understand it, re-creates the Western Europe of the 14th or 15th century, I don't know for sure) among other things.

About a year ago, some friends of mine started recruiting for Roman and Celtic units to fight in last year's Lilies War. They went to great lengths (especially THL Simon de

Mallorca who, with some help from his fellow Romans, built appropriate suits for everyone involved) to look right, and it was my sincere pleasure to see them march across the field toward us (OK, the Romans marched, the Celts charged, bare-chested but for the woad, screaming and howling all the way). It has also been my pleasure to visit the period encampments set up by my friends, and the Enchanted Ground of Cariadoc and Elizabeth. My personal goal is to set myself up with as period, and persona-appropriate, an encampment as can be managed.

Efforts like these are, I think, the future of the SCA. As we continue to mature as a group, our research will continue to build upon itself, and it will become easier and easier to do things (dare I say it?) right. Or so I hope.

—Istvan Kostka [Calontir]

HENRY V

Am I alone or are there others who got extra enjoyment out of the pre-Agincourt night encampment scene *because* it felt exactly like a night encampment at SCA events?

Like many other TW writers I enjoy night time at camping events in part because it does allow me to be a stealth peer, joining people at their camp fires for the singing, story telling and general discussion as just another face in the firelight.

An added bonus is that dark, punctuated only by firelight, hides or softens much of the mundaneness of artifacts and surroundings, allowing the "medieval theme event" atmosphere to improve.

—Kevin Perigryne [West]

AUTOCRATS

I agree with the "one autocrat" concept 100 percent. Try this one: no autocrat. That was proposed (in a roundabout way) in a barony in Ansteorra fairly recently, and, oh gosh! what a discussion *that* instigated! The idea was to have committees in charge of various portions of an event, and all the committee heads get together on occasion to make the "joint" decisions. It didn't happen, but I think that some people haven't gotten the idea out of their heads yet. One person has to coordinate however many assistants there are, no matter how many "committees" one sets up. I love having assistants for lots of things, and I enjoy being an assistant as well. But if I am going to be the autocrat, I work better if I have sole responsibility for the mistakes I make, rather than trying to solve someone else's as well.

—Æthelyan of Moondragon [Ansteorra]

MERCHANTS

Michael, oh cousin, by this logic as to merchant restrictions,¹ I would not have been able to buy that excellent

¹ TW 15:17, Michael of the Isles' response to someone who had included pagan jewelry in a list of what he thought shouldn't be sold at events. Michael was being facetious, but said he agreed, that "We should outlaw the sale of all 'junk,' including books (since less than 1% are produced in period fashion), garb with non-period dyes or fabrics, music tapes or CDs, instruments with

compilation of Michael Praetorius' *Terpsichore* music that I found at Pennsic because it was produced in a modern manner in modern notation. Since it is otherwise unavailable, I'd have been screwed and people who get music from me'd've been screwed. Our ability to enhance the Society-beyond-the-merchants'-bazaar would be curtailed. It hardly seems worth it.

There HAS to be a *via media* to this question.

—Sion Andreas o Wynedd [Middle]

People who sell "junk" in the SCA won't sell a lot of it. Not that Ælflæd's Used Treasures would be construed as "junk." I feel merchants add a lot to our events, and you can't find a lot of what you need at the mall.

At Pennsic, they have started to request that merchants who are selling things like bumper stickers keep them out of the line of view from the road. This is a pretty good compromise. I think most folks would agree that merchants are an important draw for Pennsic.

—William de Montegilt [Meridies]

RELIGION

Viscountess Caitriona is so right! [16:9] If you think people are touchy nowadays about religion, you should have lived in the Middle Ages. People were tortured and killed for "heresy" which could be so little as a minor difference in dates or wording. It didn't take a belief in a different god to get oneself in very big trouble!

Our modern neo-pagans need to be much more circumspect about their beliefs when playing in the SCA—we do still try to achieve some authenticity in our activities. Tolerance only needs to go so far. Pagan symbols are as out of place as tennis shoes, and should be treated similarly.

—Susannah Griffon [Calontir]

Editorial mediation: Now I defend the pagans!? I think "as it should have been" means we leave out the inquisition, sexual abuse, public whippings, and such. People wear crosses and stars of David, and those wearing the symbols of other beliefs should be allowed the same freedom (within reason—depends where and how they wear them, maybe; sticking a styrofoam Virgin Mary on your helm in a crest tourney might be considered a little unfair). Lots of people wear Thor's hammers who know little about Norse religion. You're correct, Susannah, that in most of Western Europe for most of the time we're "playing," heavy-duty tree worshipers kept it to themselves. Our persona-development traditions tend toward the exceptions over the rules anyway. I don't know the answer, but I share your frustration with the question (whatever it was).

—ælfled of Duckford²

non-period strings, and other such things."

² Ælflæd is a Christian married to a Norseman from Iceland who wears a Thor's hammer, who does know all the tales of those alleged gods, but who has been baptized a few times for the free shirt. Sandra Dodd is a former Southern Baptist who takes an anthropological view of god [a sympathetic atheist], married to a former Presbyterian whose religion is math.

On "paganism is not a real religion": Are you ever going to get feedback on this one! [18:15] I agree with a portion of your observation: the majority of people running around with pentagrams are simply "being different," and, as you put it, are simply participating in a alternate SCA. However, I believe your "not a real religion" comment derived from unjustly linking the serious few with the frivolous many.

I admit most people identifying themselves as Pagan form their attitudes from a blend of 'New Age and Eastern ideas, mixed with Greenpeace slogans' (I'm paraphrasing...). Treating all Pagans as members of this group commits the same injustice as characterizing the costuming Laurels as part of the t-tunic-over-blue-jeans crowd would.

I assure you there are extremely sincere Pagans, with deep commitments to recovering as much of Europe's pre-Christian tradition as possible. Generally, these folk draw inspiration from *historic* sources and authenticated folklore, rather than following the make-it-up-as-you-go school. (I'm not saying only scholars can be "real" Pagans—but those who *have* taken the time and trouble to take a scholar's approach have, in my opinion, established their sincerity.)

I certainly can't speak for other people, but I regard my Paganism as an intensely personal thing. I would no more make a public show of it than I would make love before the throne.

If you choose to print my comments on Paganism, I ask that you not use my name. I have a strong predilection for privacy. Only a few friends know the truth. I prefer it remain that way.

—Name Withheld

I felt guilty about offending those of our readers who are Pagans. Then I reviewed the questionnaires and realized that over half of those who responded have at one time or another involved themselves in practices involving blood sacrifice and ritual cannibalism, and some still practice that religion, so having pointed that out I've offended just about everyone equally.¹

—Ælfled of Duckford [Outlands]

THE SCA AS RELIGION

NOT! We are certainly a sub-culture, and one that is continuously and rapidly evolving. We all know folks who spend more time in the SCA than out of it. But we have no deities in this organization, nor does the Society itself represent one. On the other hand, renaming the Board of Directors the Imperial Virgin's Guild **does** have a certain appeal...

—William de Montegilt [Meridies]

Recently Count Valens and I went to the organizational meeting of a new group to talk to them about what the SCA is and how to get started. I came away feeling just like an evangelist who'd just preached the WAY.

—Susannah Griffon [Calontir]

¹ I thought of making it a trivia question, but for those who can't wait for the next issue, it's eat-His-body, drink-His-blood Christianity. At least Pagans don't kill and eat the green man (although a tree-sacrifice holiday *did* just pass, and we displayed a seven-foot kill at our house...).

Chivalry as a religion, maybe.

I do not see the SCA as religion, but I often think the SCA fills the place of a church. For myself I find the SCA dominates my life the way my church did in my youth. The SCA fills the same position as the institution of a church. We fellowship new members, we have rituals to learn, but the discussion of The Dream in the pages of TW shows that we have no single dogma, so I do not see the SCA as religion.

—Conor mac Cinneide [Ansteorra]

Many contributors viewed this issue as through a "soft lens," one that makes everything slightly fuzzy and hazy and dream-like, and which photographers often use to hide flaws in the subject. Nige's view [18:15] is more like that of a telephoto lens: hard, sharp, and clear—just like her prose. Thank you, milady, for common sense phrased uncommonly well.

—Cadfan ap Morgan [Ansteorra]

CEREMONY

I feel the Society is less rich for the lack of ceremonies. Strange as this may sound, I quite enjoy some contemporary religious worship meetings. There is something inspiring to witness in a group of people who truly believe in something, or at least profess it at the moment. I find the emotional tenor of churches to be inspiring from the participation of the people, even if I don't believe the same thing. Maybe this is why people cry at weddings? (The huge emotional psychic aura?)

Unfortunately, I think we as a culture have two problems with ceremony. First, we equate it too much with religion, since we have no stated class system to perpetuate secular-type ceremony. Second, we're not really sure how we're supposed to feel about things like ceremonies. We think of them as big and impressive, but the same mood can be attained by the simple use of "my lady wife" instead of "Barb." Well, ok, three problems. Because we don't deal with ceremony regularly, I don't think most of us have the patience to deal with it. This society is not conditioned to sit still and pay attention to one thing for extended periods of time. MTV. Point made?

In conjunction with that thought, has anyone, anywhere considered using or used a decent PA system for holding court? I think one of the problems with courts, especially long ones, is that the back rows are unable to hear. There are very few monarchs who've sat the Eastern thrones who could be heard throughout a large hall, let alone be heard clearly and understood. I'll probably get bounced on for this, but I think it might be a good idea, and I think I'd be willing to sacrifice the authenticity if it meant I'd actually be able to hear what was being said. (And I KNOW that the hall didn't hear my oath of fealty...I think the Royalty could barely hear it, I was so nervous.) As a shy, quiet person, I think a decent PA system would definitely be an asset should I ever be silly enough to be a queen. (Please don't stone me for this!!!)

—Dorren of Ashwell [East]

HERALDS AND HERALDRY

At various times, in many (perhaps most) kingdoms, the College of Heraldry gets a bad reputation. I suggest that there are two reasons for this.

First, a person will submit a device, badge, or name, and hear NOTHING for the better part of a year or longer. Often, the only information they do get back is that it was rejected due to conflict, isn't period, too busy, or whatever. A good herald will work with the information to suggest alternatives, however the delay has generally soured the applicant already.

Second, the Society is a very forgiving and accepting organization which has as a large fraction of its membership folks somewhat deficient in social development (Bearkiller would call them goobers). Such people rarely find themselves in positions of authority, and when they do they often feel that their authority is best exercised in a negative sense. You can spot them because they often say nay, and rarely suggest workable alternatives.

I am NOT suggesting that the College of Heraldry is largely composed of such folks. However there are a few in there (yes, and in the Marshalate and the Seneschalate...) and they are extremely destructive to the image of whatever office they hold.

By the way, screeching "OYEZ!" is not a good way to quiet a hell. It just irritates everyone and makes them want to lynch the screecher. Perhaps the College of Heraldry could spend some effort instructing in what the [U.S.] Army calls "Command Voice."

—William de Montegilt [Meridies]

PRECEDENCE

Mark Lasie of Westminster asks if other kingdoms have the idea that landed barons outrank other nobles [16:11]. I haven't seen this in Ansteorra, as yet. What bugs me is that Court Barons seem to be outranked by just about everybody.

—Tivar Moondragon [Ansteorra]

Tivar, Court Barons are outranked by people with AoA's, aren't they? Isn't it still an honorary, non-precedential deal where you are?

As far as I know, there are more Court Barons in Ansteorra than anywhere else. We make way fewer than one a year here, I think (maybe not counting former landed barons).

—Ælfæd of Duckford [Outlands]

EQUALITY OF PEERAGES

When I joined, I was told that the peerages were equal, and so have never considered them otherwise. Within each peerage, there are those who inspire respect, and, alas, a few that exhibit continuous contemptible behavior. Anyone who feels that because Sir Rhino or Mistress Seamchecker is a jerk, and therefore all members of a particular peerage must be also, is not logical enough to be dealt with rationally. Why worry about it?

I have heard it said that, in some kingdoms, the knights are considered the only true peers, and the others are of some lesser degree. That is probably true in the case of a few indi-

viduals, but certainly not by policy. Most kingdoms have many knights and masters of arms, fewer laurels, and still fewer pelicans. Does this make the pelicans some sort of elite?

John the Bearkiller has been a knight since the late '70's. He recently became a pelican. His elevation came as a surprise to him and he was moved to tears by it. I suggest that, here in Meridies at least, the knights are not given greater respect than the other orders. I have never seen it firsthand in the kingdoms in which I have resided or visited.

—William de Montegilt [Meridies]

Although I vigorously resist the concept of "kighthood" as a pan-collective order for all three peerages, there's no doubt that a severe inequality exists (man, John, "artfag"?). However, maybe I'm a tad too cynical, but though I agree with many of John the Bearkiller's remarks [14:8], I'm afraid I can't say that a general work-hard/get-respect formula is a panacea for the problem at hand (though it certainly helps).

As long as the twelve year haul I've been in, I've been all too aware of the disparity in regard between Peers of The Medallion and Peers of The Sword. As a result, mutual admiration vies with mutual envy, resentment, suspicion, hostility, etc. Let's face it: the highest peerage in the Society (royal) is—generally—achieved via the hottest stick on One Given Day; given that this is an executive branch closed to The Arts/Sciences and Civil Service, it would be difficult to imagine that there isn't some animosity between the members of the haut monde and haute couture. The ability to compete with the whole "mystical fraternity" concept/trappings of The Chivalry is another element that I've heard Laurels and Pelicans remark upon.

What's the answer? Further ornamentation of ceremony is a minor aid, but hardly a solution. Perhaps we really should come up with a ROYAL INTERMEDIATE PEERAGE for the other two branches (marquise? burgrave?); certainly we shouldn't monopolize all the hats. Maybe we should just ELIMINATE ALL ROYAL PEERAGES in general. It's certainly a vexing beast.

—Dietrich von Vogelsang [Caid]

No one ever joined the SCA as a peer. Each of us came in, was told how the game worked, and decided whether to pass or play. Those of us who stayed to play have no right to complain if we didn't like the rules after all.

The SCA is much older than the twelve years dedicated by Herzog Dietrich. It's not his fault the rules are as they are. If anyone has tried to make him feel guilty in the least that he was born with physical talents and then made good use of them, those people should consider resigning their own peerages (if any). Some of the problems cited above—envy, resentment, suspicion, hostility—range from immaturity to sin, and peers should be above them, or at least in the process of learning to control them.

Some human activities are more glorious than others, for reasons we don't even know (a biochemical response at some level) and to think the SCA could legislate this away is expecting a heck of a lot from a club that can't even settle calmly on a cut-off date. Anyone who thinks watching me type is as thrilling as watching Gunwaldt fight is a sick puppy. Anyone who thinks Gunwaldt's fighting is worth as

much to the kingdom as an on-time, useful kingdom newsletter has an odd sense of values. If bad guys are at the door, though, Gunwaldt with a stick is more useful than me firing up the computer.

There are so many different arenas and planes and areas of concern in our lives (real and otherwise) that to try to simplify everything on one list, to try to see everything at one glance, and to try to legislate equality are all attempts to make a bad, flimsy little model out of a huge, glorious reality.

Dietrich, you should be proud of your accomplishments. No one dragged you into the SCA and forced you to enter tournaments, and they didn't make you a Knight against your will. No one forced me to do the things which led to my getting a Laurel, or a Pelican. Neither of us has hurt the other in any way. We chose to play this game, with its limitations and inequities, and I think we should look to the good we can do people within the existing structure.

I will hazard a guess that if the SCA could be magically transformed into some unhappy person's ideal model, one thing would remain constant: that person's unhappiness.

—Ælfled of Duckford [Outlands]

I have decided that the only people who are worried about equality of the Orders are those who have serious self-doubt and self-confidence problems. They have far too much time on their hands if they have time for such self-centered worries. They should get out and do the things that earn peerage, and thereby they will earn the respect they desire. More ornaments and ceremony will *not* make people think more highly of the recipient.

—Susannah Griffon [Calontir]

When I was young and foolish (about eight years ago) I felt that the SCA was massively unfair. "The only way to a meaningful title is to bop people with sticks," I'd say, as if that were a wrong that needed redress. Well, it's still the only way. But lately I've come to think that that's not a bad thing. It gives the SCA a lot of its character. This is the Middle Ages, after all. We have a privileged class (athletes and their girlfriends) and I'm not in it. Officers appoint their successors, which often means their friends. The membership advises those in authority, who then do as they damn well please. *This is the way the club we joined happens to work, and it's the way the Middle Ages worked.* We do the best that we can in our own niches, and there is ample opportunity for reward and fulfillment in all of them. We just can't all have everything. Who was it that said "What we want most if something to talk about, and our structure certainly gives us that"?

—Steffan ap Cynnedd [East]

Should Laurels use Knights as role models? Should Pelicans? In our Society they are of equal rank, but "equal" should never be mistaken for "the same." These three Orders are each different in history, practice, appearance, problems, and reputation, which might lead people to wonder how they can possibly be equal or made to look equal. How indeed?

Knights enjoy a huge advantage. Beyond the historical record of knights and knighthood, literature, poetry, and fairy

tales have embellished the truth with fantasy. The knight, his king, and his squires may be the only part of the entire medieval period that the general public consistently remembers. Children dream of it.

Our Society, in its wisdom, has added the Orders of the Laurel and the Pelican as part of "the Middle Ages as they should have been." The only people who will ever dream of being Laurels or Pelicans are SCA people. And those dreams will only come after new members have learned to respect, and desire, the honours accorded such peerages.

In practice, the Knights display themselves most publicly. They are also the most accessible and the most competitive of the three orders. Every fight is a test of their skill, honour, and good humor. Any fighter may face a knight in direct combat, and the outcome may or may not be certain. Every moment of every fight builds, or erodes, a knight's chivalric reputation. Similarly, their squires display improvements and deficiencies in full view of the general populace.

Because of our many wars, the Order of Chivalry must stand together in defense of King, country, and comrades. Whatever our disagreements or dissatisfactions in the council chambers, we stand united in defense against the enemy. This makes the strength of the Knights a shared strength, each encouraged by the others' virtues. Though we must compete at practice and in tournament, we unite as a body at wars.

Laurels tend to be private, somewhat inaccessible, and only narrowly competitive. These are not faults, per se, but simply the natural consequence of their study and concentration. Knights may choose among eight weapon systems for their style of mastery. With that style, they must eventually face each of the other systems. Laurels work in hundreds of specialties, without much imperative for confrontation between fields. Most of a Laurel's work gets done at home (often in basements) where even few other Laurels know about it, they being busily at work in their own basements. Few witness the struggles of an artisan—the hours in research, the failed attempts, the inadequate completions, and the successes kept at home or unannounced. What bard will tell of the cramped fingers, the offended nostrils, the aching muscles, or of the tool that slipped disastrously? For the apprentice it is even worse, for their skills do not yet separate them from the general populace.

Furthermore, when the Laurels gather to pool their resources, at a Royal University or specialty arts event, they often get separated again by the walls of classrooms. And though many Laurels develop broad interests in a variety of arts and sciences, many do not. They choose to remain isolated, even from each other.

The Pelicans, on the other hand, are generally required to be rather sociable. They have been made peers in recognition of their service to the public. This does not always mean that they are accessible to the public. In fact, a Pelican (or prospective Pelican) is often forced by the chores of his position to maintain a semi-private, inaccessible, and non-competitive existence. Though seen and talked about, they may be too busy to be talked to. And though they may compete for the attention of Royalty or co-workers, an "I-am-better-at-this-than-you" attitude generally alienates more people than it inspires. Being a jerk is of no service to anyone.

The Pelicans, too, are generally safe from the attentions of

the Bards. No rousing songs of quarterly reports, or dreary phone calls, or feast hall clean-up. And their protégés have a practically invisible niche in our Society.

The Pelicans do not seem to gather together very often either. It's probably just a matter of being too busy. Still, they are bound together by their common sufferings and their ongoing service.

The Order of Chivalry, Knights and Masters of Arms, stride boldly into the public arena, fully displayed and personally focused on those flashing parts of a moment in which decisions are made and victory is won. The Order of the Laurel, the Masters and Mistresses, pass among us almost anonymously after laboring in their homes for hours, and weeks, and sometimes months, on our objects and performances of greatest beauty. The Order of the Pelican, those former officers and steadfast volunteers, lavish years of effort on the practicalities of our culture, getting the things done which allow our pleasures to continue and take on new forms.

These dissimilar personalities and obligations give our Society the balance of authority and opportunities we need to survive. We cannot all be knights, even those who might wish to be. But knighthood is a remarkably narrow part of medieval culture, and knights are often useless as creative or administrative creatures. Indeed, a Society populated exclusively with knights would serve only as a punishment to its inhabitants.

Nonetheless, popular respect flows most easily towards knights and herein lies the challenge to the other orders. For though each order is equally important to the Society and equally useful as a role model, the Laurels and Pelicans must *prove* themselves admirable.

In some kingdoms, or so I hear, the Knights have made this easier for the Laurels and Pelicans by debasing their own order. This can be easily done through battlefield brutality, poor blow acknowledgement, discourteous behavior to high and low, cultural insensitivity, and corruption in the selection of new Knights. Laurels can similarly lose respect by being petty, self-aggrandizing, malicious, or complacent. For Pelicans, the swiftest descent from respectability lies in rudeness, irresponsibility, and the I-am-a-god fallacy.

Each order, in each kingdom, creates and faces its own issues of respect. There is no single reason why the Laurels should be degraded in that kingdom, or the Pelicans in that other, or the Knights in that third. The cure in every case lies in the ongoing behavior and personal standards of each individual peer.

Working to reform an Order will always be awkward and embarrassing. Sorry about that. But being pointed out as a bad example is no fun either. Respect cannot be simply demanded or appropriated from another. Neither can gorgeous cloaks of estate, lavish ceremonies, or raw arrogance stand in place of active virtue.

The virtuous order, conscientious and humane, will elevate itself to new heights propelled by the respect and affection of the populace. Everything you do as a peer is a form of teaching. This is the obligation and opportunity that comes with a Patent of Arms. In that we are all, indeed, equal—though no two peers will ever be the same.

—Lars Vilhjalmsen, KSCA, OL, OP [Calontir]

SYMBOLS OF PEERAGE

After losing a great deal of weight I arrived at Pennsics curious to see just how much my physical appearance had changed.¹ I dressed in a nice tunic and put on an extra squire's belt I had. After walking around for an hour, I came back to camp. Nobody knew me, unless I yelled at them, and it was all pretty dull. My Lady, Duchess Heather then, told me it was wrong to mis-represent myself, and to dress properly. I did.

There was one other time when I went incognito. The king and queen had given me a huge, orange and black, eight-sided barrel helm as a gift, along with a set of *wooden* body armor. The Queen thought it would be fun if I wore it during Pennsics. I made a large roundshield with "Da Geek" painted on it. On top of the ugly helm, I taped a battery-operated siren. Outfitted thusly, I took the field, siren blaring. During the battle, I got struck from behind and began a spirited discussion (argument) with a couple of the enemy. They called their Earl Marshal over and he wasn't very interested in my side of the conflict (argument). I left the field after announcing (dramatically I might add) who I really was. I don't think they were too impressed with Meridean-Dukedom.

Shucks, all in all, it's better to wear the proper regalia. A fighter may get more respect wearing a white belt, but there's a whole lot more people chasing you.

—John the Bearkiller [Meridies]

I am a firm believer that recognition as a Peer is contingent on recognizability as a Peer. Knights wear big white flags that say they are Knights. It is very hard to tell Pelicans or Laurels from close by, let alone a distance. Several years ago in the West the option of putting the emblem of the order on the back of personal cloaks was recognized. There are still very few of us using the option, but it is there for us. Respect comes to the individual. Being a Peer makes people look more closely to see if the respect they are willing to give a Peer should be given to the individual.

And yes, I do think it is important to wear the regalia the majority of the time. Perhaps that is influenced by my being made a knight before being made a Pelican. As I came out of my shock, sometime after court was over, I remember looking down at the white belt (which seemed almost luminous in the dark of the evening) and thinking it would be a part of whatever garb I wore for the rest of my SCA life. It provided a humbling clue as to what Knighthood would mean: being visible and an example even when it was not convenient or comfortable.

—Anton Højen [West]

¹ This came from a letter written shortly after Estrella a year ago (1993), and the intro to the piece was this: Uilleam MacUilleam mentioned that he was at the Sunday "TW" party. He alleged that he told people about the time I disguised myself as a squire and trod the grounds at Pennsic. He thought some people (from Caid, possibly) took offense at that type of action. I hope not. But, for the sake of the truth, I will now tell the complete story..." The editor regrets not having printed this sooner, but truth is truth and old stories get older, and whatever other excuses I can apply to the fact that the letter has been misplaced for a long time. —aIfaED

Regarding my coronet: 1) I wear it when at small events in small groups where brass hats are rare and it adds to the local folks' happiness; 2) I wear it to appropriate events like Coronation; 3) I wear it because I feel like it; or 4) I don't wear it because it gives me a headache sometimes or gets in the way.

Regarding my medallions: 1) I wear them when they accent my costume; 2) I wear them when we have Pelican or Laurel ceremonies; 3) occasionally I wear them to make a statement or lend weight to my perceived level of authority; or 4) I don't wear them because they are heavy, get in the way, or are just too much.

—Susannah Griffon [Calontir]

One of the most common types of peer in the Middle is the stealth peer, most often a stealth Laurel. These are people who wear small, subtle or hidden symbols of their order. It's usually done so they can be treated like ordinary mortals instead of PEERS.

—Garlanda [Middle]

RELATIONSHIP OF KNIGHT TO SQUIRE, and PROTÉGÉS, etc.

During my fighting career, I experienced both varieties of squire acquisition approaches, those who have asked to become my squire for their own reasons and those with whom I first developed a relationship of mutual respect who I then asked to become my squire. With both categories, I clearly explained that by becoming my squire they were not simply apprenticing to a knight but becoming a member of a household with duties to, obligations from and relationships with all of its members. I especially stressed the cooperative and mutual support relationships that extended far beyond fighting and that their apprenticeship would be in *all* aspects of the Perigrinne approach to the SCA. Sadly, most of those who had approached me with a simple wish to learn to fight in my style then changed their minds about becoming my squires (most of those I wound up teaching anyway...when you are the only knight in a remote barony it goes with the territory). Of the others, all eventually became knights of whom I am inordinately proud, and all are still among my best friends.

—Kevin Perigrinne [West]

A shot was fired over my bow. I do not like writing, but Gunwaldt has lured me out. He said he must not be a good role model [18:26]. As his latest squire to become a knight, I need to respond.

Gunwaldt has been a peer since 1977, and it was easier to get a peerage in those days. The standards were lower, but he grew into the job. Some of the "proto-knights" stayed the same.

One of the things I find admirable about Gunwaldt is that he has in the past questioned his own honor, even in the most awkward place, saying in a circle, "I screwed up." That's Lancelotian-type stuff, telling people right up front when you think you're wrong. Gunwaldt acts more knightly than most of the knights I know. Sometimes he swears fealty and sometimes he doesn't, but he does more for the crown and

kingdom than some of the knights I know. He doesn't just give it lip-service. He taught me: "Never compromise your honor; once you've lost it it's hard to get it back. Always do what you say you're going to do."

Both Gunwaldt and Ælflæd are painfully honest. I've told people "If you don't want to know, don't ask," but once I told Gunwaldt and Ælflæd they had lied to me. They had been telling me how things are supposed to be, not how they actually are. They were teaching me what ideal peers were, not describing the typical existing peers. I was having a discussion/argument with someone when I was a squire, and he said Gunwaldt had almost unattainable aspirations for me, and he said for me to get a life, that that wasn't reality. [That's why I'm playing the SCA, because it's *not* reality. It's (an attempt) at a perfect world.] Gunwaldt's standards for me were high, and I thought they should apply to everyone else, too. Both Bjarni and I used to tear Gunwaldt up on road trips, we used to give him hell about peers not being good enough, about different standards of peers. Now I know what it must have felt like, because people come to me and say, "How can *that* guy be a knight?" or "You guys should really do something about him." It's like living in a fish-bowl now.¹

I used to ask why someone or other had gotten some recognition, and when Gunwaldt would tell me why I would say, "Well I do all that," and he explained that people *expect* more of people in certain situations. What I did as Gunwaldt's squire might have been taken for granted, to some extent, compared to what someone else (or someone else's squire) might be able to do. If I hadn't been in Gunwaldt's shadow, I might have gone further faster, but when I got there, I wouldn't have been as prepared. People might have said, "Yeah, but you don't know anything about the arts," or "What do you know about service?" I'm glad I went the tough route, I think it will make me a much better peer.

I feel that Gunwaldt let me get peerage on my own merit and didn't help me. I didn't get there before my time, so now when I'm in a circle I can pretty much state my mind and say what I want to say without fear that I have no right to be in there. There are people who are afraid to say things, afraid to contradict a duke or someone they feel is [for whatever reason] five times the knight they are. If I had gotten in there before my time, through the good-old-boy network, I wouldn't have the self-confidence to speak my mind, but because of the way Gunwaldt handled things I feel secure in my right to be there. I have a good foundation for my beliefs. He let me learn from my own mistakes, and my own opinions. I had some really screwy ideas sometimes and he just said, "Well, okay, you'll figure this one out." He definitely showed me how to be more outgoing, and that's important in the SCA. Watching him taught me how to teach other people, how to convey things with enthusiasm, and brought out my own leadership ability.

I became a knight, but my opinions and thoughts are probably more like a master's than like a knight, because I do question the king and his actions. I do feel it's important to

¹ Ælflæd: "So are you going to lie to your squires?"

Vagn: "No! No, Well, probably yeah. I'll tell him that's how it ought to be."

be in fealty to serve the crown and kingdom, but I don't intend to do so without question.

—Sir Vagn Olafsson [Outlands]¹

Note from Ælflæd: Vagn's terminology (that we "lied" to him) describes our presentation of the SCA in optimistic and ideal terms rather than pessimistic, critical reality. I bet a lot of the rest of you do that, too. We didn't describe the peers we were embarrassed about, but those who have the most honor (in the sense that others honor/respect them).

If someone asked me how to get a Master's degree, I would talk about years of research and seminars and writing and hoop-jumping and expense, not direct him to a mail-order diploma mill. So it was with Vagn. We didn't want to help him become a peer; if that were the goal we could have used some shortcuts, but we didn't. We wanted to teach him as much of what we knew as he had the desire to learn. We were lucky that he asked very pointed and difficult questions, because it gave us the opportunity to discuss things on a level it's hard to get to from a standstill. Some things were not at the top of his list to learn—tolerance, patience, respect for people totally unlike himself—but he hung in there and kept asking "Why?"

It helped a lot that he travelled, and not just to events where Gunwaldt would be. Reading *ThinkWell* didn't hurt him a bit, because he could judge for himself how Gunwaldt's ideas and ideals matched with those of people from other places. The most important lesson I hope he learned from being around all of you here at *ThinkWell* is that people should keep learning and growing all their lives.

—Ælflæd of Duckford [Outlands]

The other year at Pennsic (XX), several Midrealm Laurels got together in Indiana camp and had a talk about Laurel/Apprentice relations. Most liked the household model. There was one Laurel whose household was run like a "shop," another who had an extended family, and yet another who just had an intense circle of friends. A few kept to the very personal one-on-one model. Interactions ran the range from working face to face on a weekly basis to long-distance correspondence where the two almost never saw one another. Some held household mini-events and dinners. There was even one Laurel who joined her apprentice's household, as opposed to the other way round which is more usual.

I try to handle my apprentices as students in a dance studio with whom I have a more involved relationship. They, on the other hand, seem to be intent on taking us towards the extended family model. I can see some sense to this, since we are a mutual support and aid group as much as a teaching unit, but I still prefer the former as it allows me a touch of

¹ Vagn was interviewed for TW #15, and was one of the "wee squires" of an earlier issue, but this is his first solo outing. He has the honor of being the first person to be knighted by the Outlands who joined after the Outlands was a kingdom.

In his own words, he is "perpetually trying to make a perfect world in the SCA—destined probably always to fight windmills, but I'm following in pretty good footsteps."

Dave Morrison is a machinist working for a laser company in Albuquerque.

formality.

I also have two students—people with whom I have a more than casual relationship but whom I just can't take as apprentices. The first lives 12 hours away, and when we're working with a field where demonstration is the best way to communicate a concept, it is rather difficult to do much more than guide and encourage him. The second is, shall we say, too closely allied (see *Sex and the Single Peer*). I do believe in and avoid conflicts of interest.

.....

I'll throw a question out since it seems to be being danced around. How do people handle relationships that their apprentices get into? What relationship has this person to you? My apprentices, taking the extended family model, seem to be intent on acquiring "grandchildren" for me.

Now much as I may trust my apprentices to choose appropriate relatives for themselves, that doesn't mean that they'll be right for me. And what does one do when presented with the inevitable "great-grandchildren"? I have an unfortunate "great-nephew" who was acquired me in another context years ago in another household. I don't like him and I resent familiarities he assumes based on his relationship with another woman who was in a relationship with a lady I once dated.

As a result of this, I have tried to make it clear to everybody involved that my relationship with my apprentice is special and correspondent but exclusive. No one else, not children (biological or adopted), not spouses, not Sig.O.'s, not even the family dog! is part of this relationship, no matter how good a friend he may be otherwise. It sounds stuffy, but that's how I play it.

—Sion Andreas o Wynedd [Middle]

I've been a Pelican for fourteen years. I have never taken a protégé, and have trouble imagining what I would do with one if I had one. I can teach someone how to fight with rapier and dagger, or how to make a cloak or a T-tunic, or how to marshal a fight, or how to make a knife scabbard. I can't teach someone how to serve their kingdom and the Society, I can only provide a good example (or try to) and hope they will follow.

—Tivar Moondragon [Ansteorra]

To William Blackfox [16:8]: Believe me, I adore the fact that other kingdoms make the protégé system work. I lament the fact that it does not seem to here.

I came very close to taking a hard-working lady as my protégé; unfortunately she moved out of kingdom before we could formalize the relationship. This does not mean I never will in the future, just that circumstances haven't been right for it.

I'm not sure if I could teach much Pelicanish-ness, but I would stand as patron, and as sponsor in the circle. I have heard that at least one Kingdom's Laurel circle will not allow a qualified candidate to be discussed (or even brought up) if the sponsor Laurel is not present—even if the Laurel cannot attend the meeting. Is this so somewhere? Opinions? How about other circles?

—Æthelyan of Moondragon [Ansteorra]

Being a protégé in the Middle is not a very common position. We only have 45 Pelicans. About 1/2 - 1/3 take protégés. Most have only 2-4. A few have a couple dozen. Because it's so rare, people don't really know what to do with us. A minority of the populace consider us scum-suckling slugs found only under rocks, emerging from the slime to ride coat tails to Pelicanate glory. But in my experience, power brokering is actually very rare. Our peerages seem to have an unwritten rule that you can't campaign for your own dependents, either for jobs or awards. Master Eliahu ben Itzak, my Pelican, told me flat out he wouldn't do it. If he had [indicated he would], I wouldn't have taken his standard.

As a protégé to one who is both knight and pelican, I suggest you think very clearly about your different expectations and privileges for squires vs. protégés. If your squires pack your armor, is your protégé supposed to also? Or will she instead be expected to work in the kitchen if you run a feast? Who gets priority in your attention—the student closest to being a peer, squires during fighting and protégés during service? Watch out for jealousy. One knight/pelican I know has special weekly fight practices with his squires, but does nothing with his protégé. The protégé feels angry, neglected and hurt. It's easier with the squires because you can always swing a stick or talk sticks. Since having protégés is rarer, you don't have the common perceived definition like you do with squires. You have to feel your own way. Protégés worship their Pelicans just like squires do their knights. Your word will be gospel, and you will be THE role model and hero. It's just the focus is on how you do things, not how you fight. Good luck!

—Garlanda [Middle]

I don't like the term protégé much. I prefer "squire." However, that doesn't seem to be the custom in Meridies.

—William de Montegilt [Meridies]

On Mistress Ælflæd and her apprentice: I have had two of my protégés (I call them "esquires") become peers, both of the Laurels. I released them at the time, because they had fulfilled the contract. Neither had become Pelicans but that wasn't the deal. They were my protégés as *peers*. I certainly taught Master Justin du Coeur nothing about dance, nor did I teach Master Robin Argyll anything about brewing. But we talked a fair amount about SCA philosophy. Lady Helena is Mistress Ælflæd's apprentice in the *peerage*, period.

—Steffan ap Cynnedd [East]

Thank you, Master Steffan.

For the benefit of those who know that Helena "signed on" for a year and a day last Estrella, and who might be wondering what's up since I won't be at the war this year, our oaths are to be renewed for another year at Lonely Mountain Midwinter in late January.

Helena is kingdom chronicler now that I am not. She was tied with me to get it when I applied, being the first choice of my predecessor. I was given the newsletter with the proviso set by the Crown that I train Lady Helena to take it next. That's part of the reason she became my apprentice in the first place. I'm only telling this so people won't think I used unfair means to get my apprentice a cool kingdom office, or

that I forced her to do the really hard job so I could have fun with *ThinkWell*.

I must respond to Garlanda's description of the rarity of protégés in her kingdom. With all due respect, Your Royal Highness, check the definition of "rare." Over 1/3 of your Pelicans have two to four; some have a couple of *dozen*? In the Outlands we have twenty-six active Pelicans, and three have single students who are what might be called protégés elsewhere. Here's a problem for the labels: Two are attached to "Pelaurels" and one to a Pelican/Knight. We don't compartmentalize ourselves as much as some kingdoms seem to do, so they're all life-students, SCA-students, peerage students [*maybe*]. (There is a fourth Pelican whose protégé moved out of kingdom to the original protégé-land. I don't know whether they're maintaining that relationship, but they both get TW...)

Anyway, *that's* more like the definition of rarity. It may truly be a cultural difference. People in our kingdom tend to teach all comers, and it may be that the need to learn and to teach are being fulfilled already. (Theories from other Outlanders are solicited.)

—Ælflæd of Duckford [Outlands]

VIGILS

I'm very much for them, as an exercise in helping center the prospective peer and also as a great way to "fix" the elevation in your mind for the long haul. Though the particulars of court transaction in both my peerage elevations have pretty much gone the way of most of the rest of my mind, my two vigil sessions for elevation to Knighthood hold some truly Magickal moments for me which I will have or some years to come.

—Edward of Glastonburh [Meridies]

I'm for 'em. I didn't have one when I was elevated, but the I had let my peer know that I'd rather be blindsided. Besides which, at that time they were mostly only done for the Chivalry. Since that time, I have had the joy of assisting with preparations for the vigils of others. Some for folks that knew they were being elevated, and some for folks that, like me, wanted to be surprised, but wanted a vigil too (and yes, it can be done). In the case of all four, the vigils were also grand theatre, though with deep symbolic meaning, catered to the individuals being elevated. I know that they meant a great deal to all four people (two knights, a laurel and a pelican). Those of us organizing the vigils viewed them as part of our gift to the individuals being elevated. Elaborate tableaux were staged, in keeping with the persona of each individual. At all four vigils both peers and non-peers were allowed to attend the candidates. I think it is very important that not only the peers, but the friends of the individuals be able to share this precious time with them. In all cases there was time set aside for peers only, but then opened up to non-peers as well.

I've attended a good number of vigils, and I always find them moving. If I could time-warp back four and a half years, I think I would opt for a vigil. It gives you a chance for a reality check (even if you just found out you'll be elevated within the next twelve hours or so), and gives you an oppor-

tunity to hear the thoughts of a variety of people (another reason not to limit it to peers only, as non-peers' perceptions of what they expect from a peer can be of more value to a potential peer.

—Rhainnon of the Isle [Meridies]

I had a side-exchange with a non-peer about why I feel so strongly that vigils should be peers only, and wanted to share this, which perhaps was written with a little more emotion than I usually display:

"I hope you don't think that I have the idea that all peers are good, or have something decent to say. Another useful part of a secret (closed) initiation, in fact, is a string of peers coming to impart their special wisdom, after which the candidate has an excellent idea of who has special wisdom and who doesn't. It's a time to find one's place in the parade of new 'equals.' Personally, I look for things where I think they're to be found. Peers basically have signs on their heads (or around their necks or wherever) saying 'Here is wisdom.' Sometimes it's false advertising. Non-peers don't often have signs, but many are excellent resources...

"The people who wouldn't know wisdom if it lighted on their heads with talons out are the ones who will fawn over the most ignorant of peers. Never be jealous that ignorant toadies are fawning over ignorant peers. Just be glad they've isolated themselves off out of your way. I'm guessing that you know lots of peers who are looking for artistic or martial or intellectual stimulation, not for names to drop."

—Ælfled of Duckford [Outlands]

HOUSEHOLDS

Mistress Angela says that "democratic" households simply serve to institutionalize cliquishness. I couldn't disagree more. Carolingia has a *lot* of these households, and virtually none of them are cliques in the classic sense. Most simply recognize the reality that this is a group of people who like to hang around together. Virtually none are exclusive or insular in the classic sense of a clique, though. (The ones that are generally find that everyone else simply ignores their existence.) Many set out to have some kind of purpose, such as service to the barony, or study into a particular side of period; even the ones without an explicit purpose tend to work together on projects that are a bit too large for one person.

Carolingia might be odd in its social structure—I'm not sure. Basically, the barony's structure seems to be a very large number of heavily overlapping social circles. These circles include guilds, boroughs (our informal college-based groups), and households, as well as some which don't have any official existence, but which generally resemble informal households. Most have some sort of official purpose, but almost all look alike socially.

—Justin du Coeur [East]

From what I've seen, households seem to go through a definite growth cycle. They will start out fairly small (3-5 people) and get slowly bigger over the years. In their middle phase (15-20 people) they have a potential for being a serious political force in their area. Eventually, they get so big that their edges become too diffuse, and they collapse or dissipate

into the general populace of the kingdom (40-50+ people). I've also noticed that households seem to be most popular in areas where there is less contact with the "mainstream" SCA, i.e. new parts of a kingdom, or out-of-the-way corners of a kingdom. Is this because there is less of a power structure in these areas and households spring up to fill the vacuum?

—Tivar Moondragon [Ansteorra]

KINGDOM DIFFERENCES

Kingdom differences? I love them! I *revel* in them! If I travel 1,000 miles to an event in another kingdom, I want to KNOW that it's a different kingdom.

—Istvan Kostka [Calontir]

The very first royal court I ever attended had the Ancient and Honorable Crowns of the East resting upon the thrones, awaiting the arrival of the King and Queen. In they came, a glorious moment! Processed in, turned to face the populace, and the King plopped right down on the point of his crown. I guess that's what they mean by "sitting royalty." Do they have the same custom in other kingdoms?

—William de Montegilt [Meridies]

What is a "polling peer"? I have an impression I find hard to believe, so could you explain it to me and how it is supposed to work?

—Anton Højen [West]

To Baron Steffan ap Cennydd: Actually, the preternatural bowing at Estrella isn't an Occidental thing, *per se*, but rather an Aten (and perhaps Outlandish) trait. Caidans generally confine bows to the Crown, the Thrones, local landed B&B's and pet royal peers. I think it is similar in the West. We generally attribute this difference to the population density of the California Kingdoms vs. the Great Desert Kingdoms. When one sees "hats" every weekend and in the plural, bowing tends to fall by the wayside.

—Adriana d'Orsay [Caid]

To Adriana (above): In the Outlands (and Atenveldt) we don't have barony stacked on barony, but the million people in New Mexico are mostly crammed into al-Barran, Colorado's three million have a great density in the Caerthe/Caer Galen area, and so forth. At royal peers-per-million, we might have as many and as thick as anywhere, since we cranked out viscounts for ten years before we were a kingdom. We just bow more, I guess, especially at inter-kingdom events where we fear to offend deserving foreigners, every visible coronet gets recognition. This makes it kind of difficult in Ansteorra, where *lots* of people wear coronets, so Outlanders may indeed seem to other people to be bobbing up and down more than others.

But I have another question: Please, anyone who has lived in the Middle and somewhere else too, tell us What is Going On with the seeming division between peers and others. I'll present my clues and someone interpret: I've heard that only peers make banners for themselves, that the royal presence is called "The Sanctum" (no such "holiness" terms are used here), and now Garlanda says Pelicans are worshipped by their

protégés, and that Laurels sneak around to be treated like ordinary mortals.

—Ælfælð of Duckford [Outlands]¹

Are there any other kingdoms out there who prohibit flash photography by law and custom? If so, how is it best enforced, since everyone thinks that “just one” is ok? We try to prohibit it in the main event areas, but this is a real tough one since most cameras now come with a built-in flash. I’ve been surprised how badly received polite requests not to use the flash have been.

Do other kingdoms try to exclude smoking from the main event areas? Being from somewhat to very bothered by smoke (including campfires, which makes Pennsic hell). I’m interested to know how other kingdoms handle this, or if they even consider it a problem at all.

—Dorren of Ashwell [East]

TOASTS

I suspect it is I who has bored Keilyn by always starting toasts, “Ladies and Gentlemen, I charge you etc.” There actually is a good reason. I have done it that way for a decade or so because it is (proven through unscientific experimentation) quicker and more effective than crying for silence and then saying something clever. I stand up, start the formula, the hall gets quiet, and then I can make some lame attempt at eloquence.

I also observe the Eastern/Atlantian tradition that says that the ranking peer offers the first toast which is to the Monarchs. There is, of course, a chicken and egg problem here since this is the way I think it should be done and I have more often than not been the ranking peer for a decade or so at most events I attend. I normally consult the Baron/ess before I plunge in, though.

—Gyrth Oldcastle [Atlantia]

On Her [then] Majesty [now Highness] Garlanda’s comments about toasts in the Middle Kingdom: I did not realize that it was the responsibility of the chivalry to arrange who makes the toasts. This may be because in the northwest part of the kingdom, where I come from, knights are sparse. The peers at an event in these parts usually know if they are the highest ranking peer present and stand up on their own to make the toast. I was actually at a feast in a small shire in Central Illinois where there were no peers and no barons, landed or court, present. In fact, there was no one there who outranked me, with my Order of the Willow (the Midrealm arts award). A friend who now resides in that shire prompted me to make the toast to Their Majesties, so I did, but it felt really awkward. Did I transgress some point of protocol?

—Josceline Levesque [Middle]²

¹ I can see the quotes now: “Ælfælð says Caerthens are dense, and that Outlands Dukes are as thick as Dukes everywhere...”

² I am Josceline Levesque, a late-12th century Norman born in England and transplanted to Sicily. I’ve been in the SCA since November, A.S. XXII and have dabbled in music, calligraphy and holding office in the barony of Jararvellier (Madison, WI). I have

TURNING DOWN PEERAGE

A sensible Crown will find out (in private) if a potential candidate will accept or refuse peerage when offered. I now have some people who discreetly let a member of the circle know their views on the subject. I do not see this as campaigning. An apprentice could tell his Laurel, “if my name is ever brought up and approved someday...” or, for the more devious-minded, saying to a close friend, “I think I would like to be a Pelican someday, but I don’t feel ready yet,” when he knows a Pelican is near and would “overhear” such a remark. But best of all, of course, is to do what you do because you like to, and then if the Crown and circle recognize such as peerage-quality it’s a pleasant surprise.

—Æthelyan of Moondragon [Ansteorra]

In regards to Istvan Kostka’s query on whether it’s wrong to refuse a peerage, I would, with some gradations of reservation, say no. It certainly behooves the refusee to nix the offer with a high degree of Grace and Politesse, and not manoeuvre that specific branch into an embarrassing situation via tungsten-heavy grandstanding. Since being belted in Caid, I have only once been in the position of witnessing someone turn down a peerage; that it happened in a fairly public domain sat ill on my stomach. Perhaps what was most distressing was the person’s continued plaint that because the Order was (in their eyes) a rather corrupt, moribund body, they chose to work for the elevation of worthy candidates from without rather than becoming a direct participant in The Reforming Process. (If that branch is morally cancerous why would one thrust innocents into its unhealthy clutch?)

If one is truly going to turn down—for whatever reasons—an invitation to join an Order, it follows that it should be an essentially private, tasteful negation. Hurling invectives from the dark after one has been given a chance to make a difference from within is neither acceptable nor responsible.

—Dietrich von Vogelsang [Caid]

PEER FEAR

I think that one of the things that makes a peer (e.g. differentiates a knight from just a good fighter) is the ability to lead. Most peers are folks who are friendly and willing to help. Honest!

Now, there are also some folks who have problems of varying sorts with authority figures. ANY authority figures! Since leaders fulfill that role, these folks take up the peer fear burden on themselves. Sometimes they transmit it to others, by example. I consider it a self-inflicted wound, and try to get those who exhibit it to grow up.

—William de Montegilt [Meridies]

never lived anywhere else. I currently serve as Chronicler of the Crown Principality of Northshield (Wisconsin, Minnesota, the Dakotas and Manitoba). In the modern world I am Linda Olson, and I work as a secretary.

Editor’s note: This biography is updated from one which should have appeared in Issue #15 but didn’t. My fault; sorry.

Maybe it was because HG John the Bearkiller was practically my first contact with the SCA, and through him I learned almost immediately to know and be friendly with a number of Meridien peers, but I've always felt that part of being a peer should be being approachable by the hoi polloi (me). Peers are very good, sometimes the best, at what they do (otherwise they wouldn't be peers, surely?), so if you have questions they're the ones to go to for answers. Peers are definitely not "just folks"—they deserve the respect of their position—but they're nothing to be afraid of, either. I never knew a peer who didn't feel obligated to be useful to some degree, and God knows I've used most of the ones I know!

—Sister Kate [Caid]

On peers only talking with other peers at events: I am guilty of this more often than I realize. So what? These are my *friends*, the same people I have been spending time with for twelve years, since all of us were newbies ourselves. These are the people I like best, share interests, and have most experiences in common with. Why should it be wrong for me to spend my time at events with these friends who happen to be peers? Events are the only times I get to see most of them.

I do try to spend time meeting new people, but they should not expect me to abandon my long-time friends for their benefit. I have a number of friends who are newer members, and I spend time with them too. If the new person I meet doesn't become my close friend, it is not because I only like peers, it is probably because I just don't like that particular person. Not peerage discrimination, just discriminating taste in people.

—Susannah Griffon [Calontir]

HOW MANY PEERS?

I'm disappointed that people didn't give any straight answers to Eowyn's question about whether there might be an ideal percentage of a population which should be peers. I'm going to rephrase it and hope to get a response other than the (legitimate, to some extent) "everyone who deserves peerage should be a peer."

If in one kingdom 25% of all current, active members are peers, and in the next kingdom only 3% are peers, does it reflect a difference in criteria? In quality of humans attracted to the Society in their area? In cowardly lack of saying "no" once in a while? (or "yes"?). In an ideal SCA kingdom, where everyone was good and honest, and some had been in a long time, and some had just joined, and there was no such thing as interpersonal nastiness, what percentage of them should be peers?

If the very idea is too much for you to think through, consider Mensa, or the Dean's List, or the Honor Roll or something which *does* have a cut-off. If Mensa set their membership criteria to include everyone who could read, it wouldn't be much of an exclusive group. If they set their entrance level at a 180 IQ, it wouldn't be much of a group.

Possibly this doesn't matter at all, but just like the National Honor Society or similar structures, peerage is recognized across the Society. It's not wholly unreasonable to ask people to *consider* whether their standards might not be so much higher or lower than other kingdoms' that it

might be causing problems of one sort or another.

While counting Pelicans for the protégé section of this issue, I came up with this: The Kingdom of the Outlands is about to make its fourteenth Pelican at Estrella (Baron Lambert de Sur—Congratulations!). That makes our average 2 per year. Before we were a kingdom, Atenveldt was making 3.6 per year *just in what is now the Outlands*, not counting people from the Sun, Artemisia, Ansteorra when applicable, etc. Were they making too many? Are we making too few?

Now the *real* problem: We're not dealing with a changing pool of candidates. It's not like choosing the top 3% of high school seniors, where there's a discrete set of candidates which will change each year. And if I just go to the Outlands Order of Precedence and say "Forty pelicans" and then go to a membership count and say "out of a possible 1,000+ people" it won't be legitimate. Of those forty pelicans on our OP, two are now out of kingdom (but still on our list because the pelican was given by the Outlands), a dozen are totally inactive, and more than those are not members (and so don't show on the kingdom member count). At any snapshot moment, if we say "A thousand people in this kingdom, and you only make two Pelicans a year?" I would need to say that many of those who are doing the work already *are* Pelicans; many of the hardest-working non-Pels are Laurels and Knights, and the criteria for giving a Pelican as a second peerage are different.

We'd need the skills of Master Hrölf or another mathematician to even begin to make a formula for something this complex. Perhaps just getting a better idea of the complexities will help us make people feel better when they say "they should be making more Laurels" or some such.

Can we try the question again?

—Ælfled of Duckford [Outlands]

I think when peerage orders start looking at numbers of elevations they have fallen into an insidious kind of trap. It's easy to get caught up in judging a candidate's worthiness as based on the viewpoint of someone already in the Order. But polling orders need to regularly check outside their orders. If a majority of the Known World thinks Joe Schmuckatelli should be part of Order X, and treats him as if he is, then Order X needs to seriously look at why Joe isn't being elevated. Is it politics? Ego? Warped or insular standards? Or did Joe screw up and only the Order knows it?

How do you balance keeping the quality of an Order high with being self-righteous elitists who just don't want to share the wealth? What is worse for an Order—letting a bad apple slip in, or keeping good apples out because you aren't sure about them? And more important than your order, what is worse for the kingdom? Peerages don't belong to the peers or to the Crown; they belong to the populace. The Peerages and Crown administer them, but they exist for the people.

—Garlanda [Middle]

PEERS SERVING

(at feasts, in the kitchen, etc.)

In period, it was considered a privilege to be able to serve the king or ruling noble at table. Knights vied for the honor, and folk of lesser rank had no chance to do so, in those times and places where the custom was practiced. I used to see this

on occasion in the East, but only rarely in Atlantia, and not at all in Meridies.

It has always been my experience to see peers cleaning up a hall or a kitchen. Why wouldn't they? Now, at a "fancy" event, the folks in velvet Italian Ren. are less likely to wash dishes than someone in a washable tunic, and that's not unreasonable.

—William de Montegilt [Meridies]

THE ORDER OF THE LAUREL

To Gareth of Bloodwine Gorge: I share your sentiment, sir [16:16]. To be offered a Laurel for one's mundane activities would be a mistake. I happen to have a singing voice of which I am proud, but since opera is in short supply in the CMA, it is not Laurel-related. And since I am more often found on the tourney field or under a serving tray, research into medieval or Renaissance music is not at the top of my list just now. Only if mundane talents are turned to period channels (with, presumably, a large degree of expansion of ability) should arts/sciences awards be considered.

A related question: How many artisans out there have tried creating their creations using *totally* period methods or materials (no power, hand-loomed fabrics, etc.)? I would also like to know if there are situations in which this is completely impossible (period methods for making steel, perhaps?). I often hear of arts judges' comments to the effect that "non-period materials" or "non-period techniques" were used—to the artisans' discredit. I'd like some data on this.

—Æthelstan of Moondragon [Ansteorra]

Funny. I've never been asked "What did you get your Laurel in?" I guess people either know what I do, or they don't care. And to answer your unspoken question, I was given mine for calligraphy and illumination (scribing). I'm one of the slowest scribes in the Kingdom, but I guess people like what I do, because I have always had a backlog of people on my waiting list for scrolls.

I feel that all people with true creative spirit should be in the Order of the Laurel, unless some horrendous personality flaw renders them unfit to be a peer. I'm talking about people who would do what they're doing even if no one was around to see it. If they lived down at the bottom of a deep, dark cave, there they'd be, patiently at work. I'm talking people who can't wait to tell you about the latest thing they've just discovered (even if it bores the socks off you), and just have to show you how simple/neat/exciting/period it is! I'm talking the heights of ecstasy and the lows of depression. The feeling that lightning could shoot out of your fingertips and jump off your hair when you're in the middle of a hot spell, and the many comments in small rooms (thank God we don't usually have to practice our various crafts out in public view, like the Chivalry does) of "Hot damn, am I good or what? Oh, I'm so good I can't stand myself! Etc., etc...."¹ Those are the people

¹ A knight once told me that he *does* make comments along these lines to himself when he's fighting—he just can't make them out loud (that's if he has enough time to think it before his opponent rallies and blasts him out of his socks). And isn't it funny that one hears about arrogant, swaggering stick-jocks" all the time,

I want to see in the Order of the Laurel, because they're the least likely to sit on their Laurels once they get them. Skill level? Depends on whose rubber ruler you're using (and don't ask to use mine, I don't lend it out). Suffice it to say that my standard is not calibrated the same as William The's standard.

—Tatiana (Tanka) Nikolaevna Tumanova [West]

I think the difference between scribes and other artists is that (at least in the East), when they come up for awards, people want to know how much work they've done for the Signet Office. I don't routinely ask of a Laurel candidate how many articles of clothing she has made for the Queen, or an armourer how many pieces he's donated to the local group, as part of my routine inquiries about the candidate. To the best of my knowledge, every scribal Laurel given in the East has worked for the Signet. My comment, I guess, is whether a scribe could gain recognition with the Signet Office work. I don't think so. I question whether the giving away of stuff has become a requirement for this category of peerage.

—Dorren of Ashwell [East]

About the (I believe) hypocritical attitude that merchants should not receive peerages—does anyone know one single armouring Laurel who does not sell armour? Have no costuming Laurels ever taken commissions? How then can the Companions of the Laurel say that an artisan should not be elevated if they sell their work? The materials for some arts and sciences are expensive. There are many artisans who could not afford to practice their craft if they were not working on someone else's commission. Every great artist of the Middle Ages and Renaissance that I have ever heard of had some patron who paid them for their labors.

—Josceline Levesque [Middle]

SCRIBAL BACKLOG

As Clerk Signet of Atlantia I am responsible for the production, signing and distribution of scrolls within the kingdom. Lately there has been an attempt to provide "finished" scrolls to recipients at the time an award is given. Often times this is not possible; no registered name and/or no registered arms being the biggest problems. When a finished scroll is not available a promissory stating the award, date and monarchs is given in its place. These promissory scrolls are usually mass produced and vary greatly in style but are reasonably presentable.

The down side of doing business like this is that there is an ever-growing mountain of "undoable" scrolls in the backlog (currently on the order of 1000 of which 350 are doable). Sigh, time to flog the scribes again.

There has been much discussion in past issues as to the amount of time that ought to be reasonably devoted to individual scrolls. This is a very hard thing for me to quantify. Sure, I usually spend much more time on a peerage scroll, but hey, I've also lavished 50-60 hours on an AoA. I've done many other AoA's which have only taken around eight hours. As

but the real ego-maniacs go unnoticed? In this kingdom, anyway, the Laurels have a fairly low profile. You couldn't pay me to be a knight!

Signet I have to make the call as to whether or not the scroll is acceptable for presentation; other than that it ought to be up to the artist. In this vein, Eowyn makes a good point as to the currently inflated expectation as to what a scroll ought to be [17:14]; actual documents of this sort in period were normally rather work-a-day things. Nor is it even really "necessary" to encrust a scroll with gold leaf or intertwined polychromic beasts in order to produce a visually pleasing piece of art. The scrolls for our most recently created Count (Earl) and Countess were very elegantly done and the only illumination is an elaborate initial on each (many thanks to Master Anton of Winteroak).

—Tryggvi Grabardr Olsen [Atlantia]

MUSIC

I kind of like the drumming once in a while; however, at least in Calontir, the drummers are wearing out their welcome. Recently, we have had problems with drummers forcing their music/noise upon other revelers. Nothing spoils a good story-telling and singing revel faster than a bunch of drummers coming in and starting up. Some of us really enjoy the stories and songs. Some of us also enjoy the drumming and dancing. But they do not belong together. We would like a choice. So, drummers, please be courteous and do your thing in your own space.

This fall, a "moonlight tourney" was held at one of our events. The fighting took place by moon and torch light. The drummers were invited to sit at one side of the list field and provide inspiration. The fighters had a lot of fun fighting and most said they liked having the drumming going on at the same time. This was one occasion where drumming was a good thing.

—Susannah Griffon [Calontir]

Someday, someone is going to market a t-shirt adorned with a picture of a dombek. Beneath that drum, the legend "JUST SAY NO" will appear in heavy black block letters. This person will make a fortune selling these t-shirts to the SCA. I personally will take a dozen.

—Orrick of Romney [Caid]

Eowyn Amberdrake asks how bardic arts can be encouraged [17:16]. From my experience, formal competitions are the *worst* possible way to do it. It is true that such a competition will produce a few really outstanding pieces by good performers, but the majority of the time will be taken up by the untalented, the painfully amateurish, and hams. In a fighting competition, such competitors aren't a problem; you can always go somewhere else, or ignore the fight and chat with your friends, or something. In a bardic competition, you are pretty much obliged to sit quietly and pay attention, especially if it's during feast or court.

Also, there are quite a few performers out there who aren't interested in formal competitions, and don't give a fig about being *The Bard of Somewhereshire*; they merely enjoy performing. These folks tend to get squeezed out into the cold by the "competition bards." Informal bardic circles have all but died out in my neighborhood because practically every event *has* to have a bardic competition. I don't (unfortunately) know what the answer to Eowyn's question

is, but formal competitions definitely aren't it.

On a related topic, Ferelith MacDonald asks what can be done about the "Damn Drums" [17:16]. These sound like close kin to the crowd that kept me awake at Twenty-Year Celebration. My snap reaction is judicious use of a flamethrower, but the autocrat and site owners would probably take a dim view of such tactics. Realistically, zoning the drums to one corner of the site, and putting the bardic in the opposite corner is probably your best option. Fortunately, this infestation has hit Ansteorra only in its mildest form.

—Tivar Moondragon [Ansteorra]

About acoustics and sea level: At a place with trees, bushes and humidity, different ends of the site will help. In the high desert, it would need to be an exceptionally large site to keep sound from carrying across it. Higher up in the mountains, thin air, bowl-shaped site, all add up to *amphitheater*.

—Ælfled of Duckford [Outlands]

I am sad to hear that there seems to be such a dearth of music in the western lands. In Atlantia it is common to have a variety of instrumental, solo and choral music presented in every court and during feasts (it's really quite surprising that someone like Earl Cuan should have such an amazing tenor voice). Many processions have live accompaniment, and wandering minstrels are not uncommon. Hammered dulcimers often appear in the dance halls, as do harps, lutes and various wind instruments (although the "choir in a box" also makes the occasional appearance). We too have drums, but not so many.

—Tryggvi Grabardr Olsen [Atlantia]

ILLUSION-SHATTERING BEHAVIOR

Coke cans and styrofoam coolers can be ignored. People not in garb can, if one grits one's teeth hard enough, be ignored. Discussion of automobiles, computers, and contemporary politics can be ignored. PEOPLE SINGING THEMES FROM SITCOMS CANNOT BE IGNORED.

Sing traditional ballads, sing madrigals, even (and, believe me, saying this runs against the grain for a music Laurel) sing filk. For god's sake, please don't sing "Theme from Gilligan's Island." If you know no other songs, find someone who does. Ask them to teach you. They will. Honest. They'd do almost anything to escape another rendition of "Theme from the Beverly Hillbillies" or "Suicide is Painless."

—Orrick of Romney [Caid]

THE ORDER OF THE PELICAN

In al-Barran there used to be (and I hope will be again) "workshops" taught or guided by some of the resident Pelicans. The aim was to help us fledglings learn better organization skills, autocratting, etc. Perhaps if more Pelicans were to share their "secret handshakes" there would be less mystery surrounding what it takes to be a Pelican.

—Chantal Haroldsdottir [Meridies]

If Lancelot du Lac, from Arthurian mythos, can serve as the ideal Knight, then another figure from the same mythology can serve as ideal Pelican. This figure is Merlin. What, in one

sentence, did Merlin do? He labored long and hard, above and beyond the call of duty and mostly behind the scenes, so others might enjoy the glory of Camelot.

—Orrick of Romney [Caid]

MASTERS OF ARMS

Some folks have personas for which fealty oaths are not appropriate. Some folks have mundane beliefs that preclude fealty oaths. Some have personal preferences that do not include them. What's the difference? Are such people somehow disloyal? Why would anyone care to impose their own belief patterns? Sheesh!

—William de Montegilt [Meridies]

I have a minor correction to Galen's comments on Masters of Arms [17:17]. Jonathan de Laufyson was not removed as Ansteorra's first king by the board. There were some messy politics that resulted in a Court of Inquiry from the Board, and the result was that he was allowed to finish his reign (which only had a week or two to run anyway) but the new king would be crowned immediately upon winning Crown Tourney. Gunwaldt may remember this, he was at the Court of Inquiry, and he and I were head marshals at that Crown Tourney.

—Tivar Moondragon [Ansteorra]

FEALTY

Perhaps it is because I'm from the West [originally], but I feel when you swear fealty you are swearing to the Crown, not the individual. The Crown is not only one person, but the entire kingdom personified, and its people. Symbolically when, for instance, Jade of Starfall becomes king, he is no longer Jade of Starfall, but King Jade.

—Thomas Buttethorn [Caid (Southern Reaches)]

I remember thinking [swearing fealty] was "just the thing to do" until one Crown passed out an explanation of what the oath actually meant to them and how they felt the oath should affect us, the populace. Now I arrange to tactfully be out of hearing when the call is made if I cannot uphold the oath. Obviously if one has any title, slipping out becomes harder.

—Chantal Haroldsdottir [Meridies]

Just because a person has not physically sworn fealty in public does not mean that they have not taken a more binding personal and private oath. Sometimes a person is physically unable to swear fealty publicly. Whether they are unable to attend an event or simply can't leave the kitchen, the real oath that counts is the one they make personally. Some people's private oath is more binding to them than a "showy" public oath taken only to impress others.

—Teresa Berconi [Meridies]

Bish, when I became an army officer, I swore to protect the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic. Anyone who seriously thinks that SCA fealty oaths conflict with that fits Bearkiller's definition of a

goober. I *can* see that the typical (e.g. Gondor) SCA fealty oath would be impossible for a member of the Society of Friends.

Fealty is not required in the SCA, except for knights, landed baronage, and in some cases, kingdom officers. Often, kingdom officers simply give an oath to serve. I only ever once swore fealty to the Crown before moving to Meridies, and that involved a contested Crown Tournament in the East. I swore to "the lawful succession" to make a point.

In Meridies, the custom is for everyone to swear fealty. I have followed the custom. Perhaps this practice dilutes the fealty oath to simply a matter of form, but I prefer to think that it is still a contract between individuals, no matter how many swear at once.

—William de Montegilt

Geoffry d'Ayr asks if anyone in the military or civil service had a problem with SCA fealty conflicting with their oath of loyalty. I've heard of one case where just the opposite occurred. (Note to Ælflæd: I got this story from Galen, feel free to use his version if he sends one in.) The story goes that this person was in the military but was not particularly religious. When asked to swear by some thing he held sacred, he swore by his belt and chain. At some later point in his career, he was (for reasons I don't know) considering going AWOL. He was reminded that that would violate the oath he took on his belt and chain, and was thereby persuaded to stick it out.

More directly to Bish's question, Corpora specifically states that applicable mundane laws (U.S. Constitution, etc.) supersede all SCA laws. I would assume that would include fealty oaths. If someone really thinks that their fealty oaths permit them to ignore their oaths to the United States (or Canada, Australia, etc.) then they need a sharp reality check. Ask the people who were pulled out of Pennsic 19 to serve in Desert Shield which takes precedence.

—Tivar Moondragon [Ansteorra]

HOMAGE AND FEALTY¹

Sion Andreas o Wynedd is completely correct: homage is separate from fealty. To assure the feudal pyramid becomes reality in my little corner of the Middle Ages, my squires must swear both. I invite as many high-ranking nobles as possible to attend this public ceremony, to invest it by their presence with as much grandeur as I, an humble knyght, am capable of.

Many knights have opined that "my man's man is not my man," that is, the King may command me, but not my squires without my permission. How could it be otherwise? There are no fiefs of land in the SCA. With what else but my little household can I carry out the wishes of my liege?

In a true anachronistic spirit, I have amalgamated formulae from several authentic homage and fealty ceremonies, and added a few SCA-specific clauses and mediievally symbolic gestures.² I arrange for a herald to hold the script and do

¹ Pronoun alert: male will be used throughout, but this is not meant to exclude the female. I didn't create English, I just use it.

² If you want a copy, send SASE: Paul E. Clinco, 5495 East Fort Lowell Road, Tucson AZ 85712.

repeat-after me's. Unadorned, in a pure white tunic, the candidate formally requests to become my man.¹ The herald then reads a letter from 1986 c.e. to William the Conqueror describing the mutual responsibilities of vassal and lord. Then the candidate kneels, putting his hands together in the pose which later became inextricably linked with Christian prayer (i.e. homage to God); I surround his hands with my own, and the candidate swears homage. Then the candidate stands and, having answered a series of questions concerning the arts of peace, war, honor, and duty, swears fealty on my knightly chain which my Lady and I hold between us. We exchange the kiss of peace: Italian-style, both cheeks. I then accept the candidate as squire. My Lady and I remove the white tunic, dress the squire in a household fighting surcoat, and gird him with the red belt. Then I give a weapon, a sword or dagger, the better to protect my household. Unbidden, the nobility in attendance usually step forward to remind the candidate of the seriousness of the oaths and his or her new place in the military hierarchy.

These acts are contracts between free people; the freedom of a vassal is not given up because he has entered into this relationship. Homage does not create a serf. I disagree with Sion that homage is a lifelong commitment; it is, however, a stronger bond. Fealty can be shared as Barbara Tuchman demonstrates in *A Distant Mirror*; but one can only be in homage to one lord at a time. My vassals *have* given up their right to be someone else's vassal, for example, the King's. I can certainly understand that this might upset certain monarchs, but it's really not a problem, since feudalism is the ultimate chain of command.

While this relationship stands, and especially in war, my squires are at my command and no one else's. When my King broke fealty with me, he lost my entire household. I offered to absolve my squire of his homage and fealty at that time, if he wished; he did not. The dispute did not concern him. If he had then refused the King's command, he might have gotten into considerable trouble, but it would have been an exemplary act of perfect chivalry to refuse the King and obey me.

I am both vassal and lord. Except for the King at the top and the lowest gentry at the bottom, this is what it means to be an early medieval noble.

—Gareth of Bloodwine Gorge [Atenveldt]

TOLKIEN & PARENTHESES

I don't know if reading Tolkien causes parentheses, but it probably has a *lot* to do with being in the SCA in the first place. (And yes, if you were wondering, I use them too.)

—Tivar Moondragon [Ansteorra]

I, too, read *The Hobbit* at an early age (thirteen or so). I guess this influenced my writing, but then so did *The Princess Bride*, which is also full of parenthetical remarks.

—Æthelyan of Moondragon [Ansteorra]

¹ Likewise my female squire. For her to swear to become "my woman" was much worse than calling her a man. I discussed this with her and her lord and they appreciated my decision.

LANGUAGE

*If you just hate the history of English,
skip to the next section now.*

I ran across the following quote in a patent law case. I thought you'd appreciate it.

A word is not a crystal, transparent and unchanged, it is the skin of a living thought and may vary greatly in color and content according to the circumstances and the time in which it is used.

O.W. Holmes, *Towne v. Eisner*, 245 U.S. 418, 425 (1918).

—Keridwen of Montrose [Outlands]
temporarily in the East, at a tax school for lawyers

All of the TW discussion over jargon reminds me of a quote (I think it's from Heinlein, but I could be mistaken): "The English language is the result of Norman men-at-arms trying to make dates with Saxon bar maids, and is no more legitimate than any other result of the attempt."

Personally I am much more unforgiving of imprecision in language than I am of some of the other linguistic sins we belabor in TW (not to say that I am in favor of them).

To the best of my knowledge, "gentles" is period terminology (it appears in Shakespeare) and is an acceptable collective noun, but like many other perfectly period words, it gets mis-used in the SCA (I strongly doubt that the singular form "Gentle" is correct usage). Gentlefolk works just as well and is just as non-sexist.

—Kevin Perigryne [West]

I was wrong. I looked "gentles" up in the Oxford English Dictionary and there are ten citations before 1600. It's a fine word, not made up, not just a chop-job of "gentlemen." Sorry.

Gentlefolks (with an 's') is later, rarer (at least in print / writing) and "gentlefolk" (no 's') specifically noted as being 19th century.

—Ælfled of Duckford [Outlands]

Speaking of SCA names (from way back when), I use SCAfolk [pronounced *ska fohk* (long vowels on both)]. Scadian is rare (very rare) in this area (MN-WI-ND-SD: Northshield).

—Peregrine the Illuminator [Middle]

Someone once mentioned that using "Master" and "Mistress" as peerage titles eliminated the period form of address for those who are not yet armigerous. How about "goodman" or "goodwoman"? I believe these were used in England as a respectable form of address for commoners, but I cannot remember where I came across the terms. Does anyone know if they are period?

—Lady Josceline Levesque [Middle]

CAMPAIGNING FOR PEERAGE DESIRE / MOTIVATION

Some of the finest peers I ever knew campaigned a bit for the peerage—and why not? Yes, they wanted it. Because they wanted it, they worked very hard for it and it was to the benefit of all of us. They worked hard and they deserved the

reward for it. They are still fine peers. What is wrong with working for a goal? I cannot see myself sitting down with my husband at Christmas time, going over my kid's Christmas list, and saying "Gee, we can't give him that, he wants it so much!" Really. Should we be giving all the peerages to people who don't want them and won't value them? Of course, I once heard it said that anyone who would run for city council was too dumb to actually serve as councilman... But for me, the campaigners are simply being honest. I admire both their honesty and, very often, the quality of their work. False modesty is, well, false.

—Nige of the Cleftlands [East]

As we grow up we are constantly encouraged to strive for recognition—in school, Little League, 4H, music competitions, talent shows, fairs, beauty pageants, sports, etc. We are trained to seek to be the best we can—and to seek recognition for our accomplishments!

Why should we suddenly be expected, as members of the SCA, to become oh so modest and deny our ambitions? And is it so wrong to wish to be recognized as an expert in a particular field (Laurel) so you can speak with acknowledged authority? If it is not wrong for fighters to try to win tournaments, why is it wrong for them to want to be recognized as one of the best fighters (Knight)? [I haven't figured out an analogy for Pelican yet.]

I have been in peerage circles and heard people say that a particular candidate didn't really want to be a Laurel, then found out later that the speaker didn't know what he was talking about. The candidate wanted to be a Laurel more than anything but was afraid to say so, to the extent that she had said she did not want it, to appear to *not* be campaigning. And it took almost two years longer before she was given the Laurel. The members were so sure she didn't want it that they decided to wait until they were convinced that she did. (In our kingdom most Crowns are terrified of offering peerage to someone who might refuse.)

—Susannah Griffon [Calontir]

"I hope, someday, to deserve the honor of becoming a peer." To me, this sounds better than, "I want to be a Laurel/Pelican/Knight." Being a chivalrous, honorable, skilled person is, to me, much better than being a peer. Happily, most SCA folk who are one are also the other.

—Lord Peregrine the Illuminator [Middle]

Here we have this grand and beautiful organization. Every once in a while someone is brought up front and the Crown gives them this neat award. This award (a peerage) lets them wear stuff that sets them apart from everyone else. Their status is improved and people, usually, treat them differently from then on. They get a title and initials after their name. They even get to take students. Is it any wonder "campaigning" occurs? Shoot, I even got offered a large sum of money (a couple of thousand) to give someone a Laurel once. William the Lucky is right. As long as the award is the goal it's awful hard for anyone to focus on the right or wrong way to act. As for us Peers, it's a good thing modesty isn't listed as a quality needed to earn the award.

—John the Bearkiller [Meridies]

Everyone agrees that campaigning for awards is "loathsome and undesirable." Oh yeah? Well then, how come squires are allowed, nay encouraged, to openly work towards a belt? Why is it that pride is a vice, except for the Chivalry who should be proud as a virtue?

A squire is *expected* to want to be a knight. An apprentice is expected to want to be *good enough* to be a Laurel, but not to actually want to be one. That would be *pushy*. And *no one* is expected to actually want to be a Pelican. That would be *insane*!

What's this about the equality of the peerage?

—Steffan ap Cynnedd [East]

PEERAGE

I think it befits a peer to spend whatever time and effort possible to better the SCA. I can't do as much as I used to, but in many ways, my contributions have changed. Instead of being an Urban Master (thanks, Lars / 15:20) who does a lot of crank-it-out work with a few masterworks, I now do only a few masterworks a year. But I've also made a commitment to trying to finish by BA, and I'm doing other, different things in the SCA. Writing for TW is one of them...I hope if I can keep up intellectually and verbally with this crowd, I'll be better rounded generally. I get a great deal of joy from writing, so a once-monthly contribution to TW is a goal I've set for myself.

—Dorren of Ashwell [East]

Geez, Sine nic Donnaich makes me wonder how come I've had so much fun the last fifteen years.¹ The argument that being a peer is an unendurable burden full of sorrow, by the way, seems to fill up a lot of peerage vigil time, which is why I generally tell peerage candidates to relax and enjoy. Yes, you are FOREVER a peer, but you are also FOREVER yourself and it is, usually, your own self that got the king and queen and whatever peerage it is to ask you in.

I suppose people do expect the darndest things, but I sometimes like doing the darndest things as, I think, do most other folks who receive peerages. Hiding in the shadows won't do you much good either. If your work adds measurably to the Kingdom, it tends to glow very brightly even if you think you are unseen.

And, believe it or not, if you have to tell someone, "I'm sorry, I can't travel 300 miles this weekend to teach fighting to people even though I promised to three months ago because:

- A. I feel really cruddy
- B. My car broke
- C. I have to work unexpectedly
- D. None of the above,"

most someones say they understand and think none the less of

¹ A belated (belated by the editor) response to 14:12, part of which was "People will expect the darnedest things from you at the most inopportune times. They'll forget that you have real lives, water heaters that break, and mothers-in-law coming to visit. When you say yes to being a peer (should you be asked), please remember what lies ahead for you—a marriage to the SCA that can only be severed by leaving it behind."

you. Also, peers screw up big time all the time. Most people do not get to be peers without taking big risks. Past success does not insure future success even with hard work, perseverance, and talent.

Yes, lots of peers get fed up and walk away. Lots of husbands and wives get divorced too, although I do not think it lessens the value or validity of marriage. A warning though—I am incurably optimistic and believe that any marriage, no matter how bad, is salvageable. I tend to think of relationships with the SCA that way too.

So to sum it all up: It's better to accept the well-meant recognition of a peerage and keep doing what you enjoy which is what got you the peerage in the first place.

—Gyrth Oldcastle [Atlantia]

On purging Peer lists: I am the keeper of the list of active peers and nobles in Calontir. I constantly update it with address changes and additions of new peers, then make sure the Crown has a current list. I don't bother to keep current addresses for inactive peers. My own definition of inactive is that I, who manage to make most of our events, haven't seen them within the past year. Since I do the work and keep the list voluntarily, I get to use my own definition. Our Crown may choose to poll or consult with any of the peers they may choose. If they want to contact inactive peers, they have to find out their addresses somewhere else.

It is true that peers sometimes take long sabbaticals and then return. Calontir has had several who became active again and requested to be added to the list again. We have also had some who had moved away come home, to our great delight. And then there are the peers who move to Calontir from other kingdoms. The list of active peers is constantly changing.

Oh, yes, in Calontir, we consider viscount(ess)s, count(ess)s, dukes and duchesses to be peers equal to (or greater than) the bestowed peerages. Our "Council of Nobles" by law includes the territorial baronages too.

—Susannah Griffon [Calontir]

I would pay money to sit in on a heavy peers discussion on the peerage and what it is all about. I don't think that there is enough discussion to clarify the issues and thinking about it. Only the "us" and "them." Who are they? Why are they? What are they supposed to be for? To me, it's a job, plain and simple, the same as all awards. Your job is to help the ones coming up and be an example. The higher up you go, the harder the job gets, and for the sake of the Society, the better you should do it.

In some comments people have made, they indicated that they preferred not to help someone clean up their act but to let people figure it out for themselves. But would you do that for an apprentice/squire? For a friend? Or if you thought the person was basically decent and just needed some fine tuning and maybe some counseling, would you try to help that person? They may not be getting input from anyone and be going along thinking everything's fine. You don't know why a person does what they do. As has been said also, many people in the SCA have been damaged getting here. That doesn't make them bad or worthless. Maybe someone or several someones thought so and made them think so. Doesn't

being made a peer mean that you have some kind of handle on what you should be doing in the SCA? Doesn't your oath when you become a peer obligate you to teach and help others? If you see someone who could benefit by some advice and you say (in effect) I'm going to withhold advice because they aren't perfect (like me) aren't you violating that oath? Why not give it to them and see what they do with it. Sure, some people are scumbags but some people just need a little friendly advice and maybe someone to talk with. If more peers were like that maybe there would be less "peer fear." I think that it's far better and more important to make a positive difference in someone's life than to guard, jealously, some secret "true way" for fear that they may misuse it. If peers can't bring themselves to do that, of what good or use are they?

—Thomas Buttethorn [Caid (Southern Reaches)]

Is the Middle the only kingdom where non-peers are afraid to oppose or criticize peers for fear of blackballing?

—Garlanda [Middle]

INTEGRITY

I agree with Cariadoc that if the person acts something consistently he becomes it. But what about the reverse. A person is a total jerk, playing his perception of his persona to the hilt, but is quite pleasant in the real world. The true self is eventually uncovered or emerges.

—Chantal Haroldsdottir [Meridies]

I found this in a letter I wrote two years ago, at the end of a story about how I had been asked to help someone do something difficult. It was a person I didn't like one bit. My assistance would make the other person look better, which was causing my hesitation. It would benefit others in the SCA, which is why I decided to help, but I wrote "...so either I'm selfless and tactful or I'm a coward and a hypocrite. Probably some of all."

It's hard to be honest with people sometimes, and it's hard *not* to be honest with people sometimes, and it's often hard to decide which way to jump off that fence.

I salute those who have the courage to take on difficult "interpersonal tasks." I admire those who figure out how to say just enough without saying too much. It is a talent we should praise when we see it.

—Ælfled of Duckford [Outlands]

NEWSLETTERS

It's very nice to see Countess Tamera's appearance here. Twenty years ago she put out a newsletter which was better than many newsletters these days. The quality of her newsletter was why we got Pikestaff in Phoenix in those days, so we could tell people in Atenveldt what a newsletter could be like. (Southwind was dittoed at the time.)

—Mark Lasie of Westminster [Outlands]

Editor's note: Tamera did Tournaments Illuminated for a while, too, and was one of the two editors of the first Known World Handbook.

CHARISMA

I don't know that people have to have "people skills," at least to qualify for the Pelican (Re: Edward of Glastonburh 15:31). I wouldn't say the Pelicans are the *rudest* peers (that would be the Laurels), but a substantial number, in the East at least, tend toward the Crank, Curmudgeon and Bitch end of the spectrum. If they WEREN'T that sort, they might not have gotten much or anything done! Certainly that isn't the ideal, and there are limits to the sort of behavior we'll put up with whatever the reason, but Birds do have a tendency to be a mite more prickly of personality than other peers.

—Geoffrey d'Ayr of Montalban [East]

JUDGEMENT

Good judgment comes from experience. Unfortunately, experience comes from bad judgment.

Anonymous

(Transmitted to TW by Amal' al-Jabal Hamrini)

Kevin's analogy comparing dishonorable acts to writing bad checks is perfect! Now, I won't be able to keep from thinking about people being overdrawn or bankrupt!

—Susannah Griffon [Calontir]

ANOTHER EDITORIAL EXPLANATION: *I received a complaint about my spelling of judgement. The "e" in the middle is fading from current use, but is still listed as a current alternate spelling by both American Heritage and Webster's. I'm leaving it spelled either way it comes from others, but my original thinking was to use the one which looked least like legalese and more like old-time English. If you're in a spelling bee anytime soon, try it without that "e".*

AWARDS-CRITERIA

To Mistress Dorren of Ashwell [15:31 about why she had the kingdom service award]: There are a number of "arts" where you also provide a "service"; producing scrolls, regardless of your *skill*, that are good, solid consistent, etc. This is a service. Cook a lot of feasts that aren't wildly out of period and nobody throws up 24 hours later? Made the King enough field garb that he can get through Pennsic without having to bury his fighting tunic after filing an environmental impact statement?

There are a lot of dual art/service activities; for the service component, you don't necessarily have to be great at what you do; for the arts, you don't necessarily have to be prolific.

Some of us are both! In the case of the Kingdom Service award (The Silver Crescent) the best rule of thumb I can give you is that this award *tends* toward long, quiet service. And here, yes sometimes mediocrity gets rewarded-somebody who just does their job in a local office where two predecessors were notably incompetent and the third still has a bench warrant out on him?

Sometimes just steadyng the boat is a virtue; most often, it's going beyond that. "Cleaned up the office and implemented new fiscal controls." Another award winner is often the person who is just plain there doin' what's needed.

Staying after events to mop the floor or clean the pots is cool—and if they've been doing that for quite a few years now and *also* run dance practice and help chop veggies and helped sew the baronial tablecloth and recruited four new members and...in other words, LOTS of "little things" over a several year period.

The difference between the Silver Crescent and the Pelican is that Pelican is either for a bigger hunk of time doin' all those little things, or for doing some pretty spectacular things (Leaps tall Heralds in a single bound!) It tends to be a matter of degree, not kind.

Well, did that just muddy the waters irrevocably?

—Geoffrey d'Ayr of Montalban [East]

ARCHERY

Kevin, we do recognize archery as an art. We just require as high a level of authenticity, skill, research, and teaching from archers as we do for other arts. I have yet to meet an archer who fits all these requirements. Skill in shooting a modern break-down recurve bow is not enough! Many very skillful modern seamstresses who know little about period costuming are not Laurels either. Are [there archers] willing to put out the effort to be truly outstanding?

—Susannah Griffon [Calontir]

Archery—especially making of bows and arrows—is a craft, learning to use them properly is an art. Using them very well for the benefit of one's Kingdom (archery point at Pennsic) or teaching their manufacture/use is easily construed as a Service.

So I got no problem with giving an archer either a Laurel or Pelican. The question for me to ask (I do so love putting a cat in the canary cage) is: "When will the Chivalry recognize the Martial Arts Contributions of Archery and Fencing and grant knighthood *sans* rattan?"

—Geoffrey d'Ayr of Montalban [East]

So, it's the old archers' peerage you're wanting, is it? And how about the fencers while we're at it? How about shinai fighters (I think they do that somewhere?) How about tacticians and battle leaders who aren't chivalry material?

Were it not for some frightfully archaic wording in Corpora, I would not hesitate the Mastery of Arms as the best place for all these people. The Master of Arms is meant to be an award for martial prowess, and as we're seeing, there are more avenues to martial prowess than rattan-jockeying. In addition, the Master is not automatically in fealty to the Crown. It would require but little Board action to make this change, and it would seem to me to be the least disruptive to the Structure as we have imagined it. As opposed to making a new peerage, I'd prefer we work within the existing structure where possible.

On the other hand I'd like to be able to fly, too.

—Sion Andreas o Wynedd [Middle]

STATION IDENTIFICATION / NAG

This is *ThinkWell*, home of the original Lapseproof Subscription. Fifty of you need to write checks to get back ahead. We are talking some actual cash now, folks. Pay up.

LONG MEMORIES

I wanted to express my appreciation of Elinor duPont's words on Long Memories [14:25]. A phenomenon I find interesting in this particular area is that the people who insist on hanging on to those long memories, and those who are most critical and unlikely to forgive and forget are those who have rather notorious backgrounds themselves. On one hand I find it encouraging that some of our more respected leaders have had pretty questionable days themselves and yet managed with time and effort to gain the respect of their peers. On the other hand I find it frustrating that the same people have such short memories of the pain they must have felt when people were being unforgiving of them. I am very fond of gemstones and I find myself using the following analogy often, both when I am feeling like the Long Memories are my personal pain and when I am tempted to hang on to long memories of another person. Gemstones are not made overnight, and in order to find them we must dig through rock, mud, deadly gases, bogs, etc. Most gemstones—specifically diamonds—are made from rather unlovely things such as coal. The most valued gemstones are the ones that have been through a great deal of stress and pressure, and most important, time. Most of us in the SCA come from uncomfortable family backgrounds or social situations. Some of us have had little practice at being socially "ept." With time, patience and encouragement, many of us learn to be someone we like. I think that the gemstones of the SCA are often people who have been through their own stresses, pressures and pain. Give others time. A really wonderful person may be lurking under all the unpleasant stuff on the outside and that person may be doing their best to dig their way out from under the rubble. Some dig faster than others, but that does not make them any more or less valuable than slow diggers.

I do not propose that every indiscretion should be forgotten immediately, but that the indiscretions should be noted, and then any improvements should be noted too. A person who has climbed from the bottom of the pit to the top of the mountain has done twice the hard work, and is more dedicated to personal improvement, than the person who started halfway up the mountain. I think we need more peers in the SCA who have had to work really hard to gain the respect of those who matter, because they will be the ones who look for the hidden gems among us, and they will be demanding of hard work and dedication, and they will be forgiving when the time comes to forgive.

—Taryn Brannick [Outlands]

This is a thorny issue. In the name of fairness, we feel the need to give people a second chance, and believe that they can get better. But we also should be careful not to give another office to the *ex*-treasurer who stole the shire's money a few years back, or to someone who lost all the kingdom files for the office they were removed from a couple years ago. It is still important for us to protect our Society and our local groups from potential damage of that nature.

The same could be said for our peerages; we should maintain our good image and respectability. This will require us to use judgement in each situation as it arises.

—Susannah Griffon [Calontir]

APROPOS OF NOTHING:

The converted Boeing 747 that NASA uses to haul the Space Shuttles around is called the Shuttle Carrier Aircraft, or SCA. The converted Antonov 225 that the Russians use to haul *their* shuttle knockoff around is nicknamed "Mriya," or Dream. Another side-effect of the infinite improbability drive, I guess...

—Cadfan ap Morgan [Ansteorra]

JUNG / MENTAL HEALTH

Here's a period solution to some of our problems: "If any man does anything sinful against you, then take that warrior aside by yourself, and advise him of it in secret and set him right with words. If he proves himself to be unworthy of this by not listening to you, then take some other good man with you and criticize his grim handiwork to him—saying it in wise words. If after this he does not regret his harm-causing sin, then let other people, many of them, know about his wrongdoing. He will find it easy to begin to regret what he did, to rue it in his mind, when he hears about it from many warriors—people are aware of it, and censure him in words for his evil deed. If however he still will not deviate from his course, and scorns all these people, then let the man go, treat him like a heath-dweller, let him be repulsive to you in your mind, avoid him in your emotions, unless it should happen that the kind and generous God, the lordly King of Heaven, as the Father of all the sons of men, again grants him help."

I got a book for Christmas, opened it randomly, and that's the first thing I read.¹ It's just nearly what the social worker advised someone about a problem-member [18:34].

—Ælfæd of Duckford [Outlands]

¹ It's *The Heliand—The Saxon Gospel*, which was a 10th century paraphrased version of the Gospels. It was in Old Saxon, and was in verse, to be recited or sung in mead-halls or at feasts, not in church. It reminds me of the hippie translation of the New Testament that went around in the late 1960's, when Jesus was saying "Groovy!" only this is a medieval warrior version. The Mediterranean culture is translated into the early Germanic culture of Northern Europe—Peter is referred to as "best of all thanes," and refers to Jesus as "beloved Chieftain," and "Christ the All-Ruler" and such. It's almost like reading a saga. When Jesus calms the sea, they're in a longship (*hoh hurnidskip*)—no little fishing boat! "The weather-wise warriors hoisted up the sail, and, keeping the wind aft, they ran before it over the ocean swells...the boat glided onward, the high-horned ship." "He who lives by the sword will perish by the sword" becomes, "Whoever is eager and willing to practice the weapon's hatred, cruel spearfighting, is often killed himself by the edge of the sword and dies dripping with his own blood. We cannot by our deeds avert anything." I bet it's *really* bloody in the original.

I digress. I guess it's a book review. Thank you, Duchess Jeanne d'Aussey, for the hot Christmas gift.

I know you people like language and culture, so if you want to see how that shepherd-and-fisherman Christianity was made palatable to Charlemagne's Saxon subjects, here it is. Translation and commentary by G. Ronald Murphy, Oxford University Press, Inc., 1992, ISBN 0-19-507375-4 (cloth) or ISBN 0-19-507376-2 (paper).

EVENTS/DISCUSSIONS

Estrella Discussions: Friday, Saturday and Sunday evening in the Atenveldt Royal Encampment, in the dining pavilion after dinner each evening. Thanks to Her Majesty, Corisande, for offering this gathering place. Alan and Corisande may be too busy to attend themselves, but the following people have agreed to serve as hosts/moderators: Viscountess Catriona ni Bhrianin on Friday, Duke John the Bearkiller on Saturday, and Baroness Éowyn Amberdrake on Sunday evening. Even if people just get together and introduce themselves to one another and shoot the bull *du jour* it could be good.

Notices will be posted at the site.

—Ælflæd

Last minute note:

Ælflæd, you won't miss anything at Estrella. The SCA is full of once-in-a-lifetime moments that seem to occur weekly, monthly, and quarterly. You will be missed, but that's everybody else's loss. Real life is much more important! Funny, I would have choked on that last statement ten years ago.

—John the Bearkiller

February 26, 1994, Black Gryphon Collegium, Lady Nina of the Lost Caverns will moderate a *ThinkWell* discussion hosted by the Barony of Thor's Mountain, Meridies.

May 28, Grand Outlandish near al-Barran, in the Outlands (Albuquerque), discussion Saturday night in the camp of the autocrat (Gunwaldt) which is also the camp of Ælflæd of Duckford.

Calontir Lilies War VIII will be held at Smithville Lake, Missouri. Site will open Saturday afternoon, June 11, and close at noon Monday, June 20. The maximum cost for members is \$20. We have 200 acres of camping space—no reservations required (actually, none allowed).

Our theme this year is a celebration of Calontir's 10-year anniversary as a kingdom. There will be many history theme activities, including a big party with a huge fireworks display. The sides will be based on the two Calontir fighting orders—the Huscarls and Fyrd—and their allies vs. the knights and men-at-arms and their allies. The actual battle scenarios will be roughly based on the Norman Conquest of England.

For more information, folks can contact me by phone or mail: Susannah Griffon

Susan R. Jackson
9817 Hollingsworth Rd.
Kansas City KS 66109
913-334-2098

My favorite advertising idea is "Ten Pounds-Ten Days-Twenty Bucks" Give us a week and we'll take off the weight! (Honestly, I lost ten pounds last year!)

—Susannah Griffon [Calontir]

FANTASIES

If I could enforce one rule of conduct it would be this: *Talk to the person you are mad at first.* It is so destructive to tell your complaints to everyone but the actual offender.

—Name withheld at author's request

NEXT MONTH

More on Chirurgeons and Combatants; What people think about what the editor thinks about pagans; The real problem with drums; Alcoholics and the SCA; Fancy Fantasies about the Society as it Should Be; More real-life role models for Laurels/Pelicans; Mercenary Musicians & Calligraphers?; Actual fealty oaths from different kingdoms; Principalities and new kingdoms; Index of TW #1-20 (I hope).

If you would like to order a **ThinkingCap** to wear while you wait, send \$7.50 to the regular place (Sandra Dodd, 8116 Princess Jeanne NE, Albuquerque NM 87110).

PUBLICATION POLICIES

WE NEED YOUR IDEAS

I won't publish things unless I have the author's SCA name, ordinary name, and address, but I might publish it "name withheld" or "anonymous" if requested.

It helps greatly when people include the issue and page reference of what they're commenting on, and if the letter has the whole SCA name right on it so I don't have to look it up to spell it right. I *can* look these things up, but I call blessings down upon the heads of those who save me the time and trouble.

Whether your material gets in depends somewhat on what others sent, whether your comment fits in with another set of comments, where your letter falls in the shuffle of the pile, the humidity, etc. It's a complicated formula; I don't understand it myself. There are other comments still in the pile every bit as good as these, and about new and exciting topics! I shall endeavor to continue to crank these out as long as there are readers. Sorry I can't use everything.

FEEL FREE TO PROPOSE NEW TOPICS or to comment on what's gone before, even back to the first issue.

length—no such thing as too short. If something needs to be long, try to make it fun. Long and humorless are the worst combo.

content—make it productive, positive, don't name names in a negative context

deadline—Send what you have when you're finished. If you miss one issue and it makes the one after, no big deal. Time+Urge=Ability. When I get near thirty pages, I'll start winding it down.

format—legibly on paper, preferably (second choice is a diskette my Macintosh can read) **PRINT NAMES** if you're writing by hand, or write very carefully.

cartoons—same as above. Don't use recognizable people in a negative way.

Anything I think might get you or me into trouble will not be published (but I might send it back to be toned down, or print excerpts or a paraphrase).

YOUR IDEAS CAN FEED A STARVING MIND

Here ends *ThinkWell* #19.
January 28, 1994

ThinkWell

Issue #19 Subscription Form

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other countries need to contact me and we'll figure something out; New Zealand is still in flux

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INDEX NOT YET AVAILABLE, but the plan is that
the first edition will be FREE with issue #20
and after that, probably \$2.50 (still thinking).

Mail to:

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BACK ISSUES OF *TOURNAMENTS ILLUMINATED* FOR SALE

BACK ISSUES OF T.I. to complete your collection or to give to your friend, squire, apprentice, protégé, or student—buy 'em here!

SPECULATION: Someday these will probably be sold in plastic baggies like old Superman Comics. You might want to buy a few just to have to sell at the Fifty-Year Celebration! (Okay, the 35-year...)

AVAILABILITY: Some of these are available *and cheaper* from the SCA Stock Clerk, P.O. Box 360743, Milpitas CA 96043. I encourage people to buy things from the Stock Clerk, but some aren't available there. The SCA's price for those they have is now \$2.50 per issue. When I ran my last sale, their price was \$2 and mine \$4. They raised theirs; mine stays double, so if they have it in stock, buy it from them for \$2.50 or from me for \$5.00 (from them you get bookrate; from me you get first class, a quicker response, and bigger better *ThinkWell* stuff).

Those I have which the SCA stock clerk doesn't have (and they're not planning to reprint these, as far as I know) are \$7.50 each. This is up from \$6 last time, partly because the demand was high before, and so that I can keep things in TW subscription units (increments of \$2.50).

OUTSIDE THE USA: Pay the asking price plus the difference between what U.S. first class would have been and what your actual shipping costs come to (surface, bookrate).

INDEX: The SCA has an index to T.I. which is good through #101 for \$3.50, so you might get one from them to see which issues you want, or if you just have a general interest I can check my index and try to pick issues which have some of what you'd like to read.

IF YOU HAVE EXTRA T.I.'s you would like to donate to the cause, I would gratefully accept them and find them good homes. If you need to mail them, I'll apply the postage costs to your *ThinkWell* subscription. (Please use book rate or some other inexpensive mode of transport.) Here's what I have as of 1/28/94: (boldface means not available from the stock clerk so \$7.50 instead of \$5):

31	1 copy	59	3	76	10	93	4
32	1	60	2	77	6	94	4
35	2	61	5	78	12	95	5
36	2	62	5	79	9	96	4
38	2	63	4	80	13	97	6
39	3	64	2	81	9	98	3
40	1	65	5	82	8	99	2
41	1	66	10	83	5	100	4
46	1	67	4	84	6	101	6
50	3	68	6	85	8	102	6
51	2	69	5	86	4	103	7
52	1	70	9	87	4	104	5
53	1	71	7	88	4	105	1
54	2	72	5	89	6	106	1
55	1	73	6	90	6	107	1
57	2	74	7	91	5		
58	4	75	5	92	4		

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